

## 29. HEAVEN

Nighttime did come eventually. Renesmee had fallen asleep at her usual time, between seven and eight o'clock. She'd been sleeping twelve hours at night, which seemed like a lot for a relative newborn until you considered how fast she was growing. Though she'd had a nap late in the afternoon, it had also been a busy and exciting day for her.

The nursery wasn't yet in place. With Charlie's visit, we hadn't had time to work on it, though Esme had drawn some sketches of Nessie's room with different color schemes and furniture layouts. Renesmee could choose the colors she wanted and Esme would bring in the furniture. As long as she had a crib, her parents would be happy—though our baby was growing so fast that she probably wouldn't need it for long.

We'd decided to maintain the status quo for one more night (or until the nursery was ready). After Renesmee fell asleep, we handed her to her grandmother before retiring to our cottage. Bella was feeling elated about her wrestling victory over Emmett and was hopeful that he would honor his side of the bet. I thought he would as far as he could help himself, but I also thought that he would try to alter the bargain by winning a rematch.

Despite Bella's victory, it was hard for her to forget that Emmett and the rest of the family could hear our more vigorous activities from the main house. I was used to that inconvenience and, heaven knows, I'd intruded on everyone's privacy every day of my vampire life, but Bella hadn't adjusted to it yet. If Emmett were more of a gentleman, he would keep his eavesdropping to himself, like everybody else did. The one saving grace, as Bella would soon learn, was that she could hear him as easily as he could hear her, so over time, such things balanced out.

We left the house and walked hand-in-hand to the river. I was hoping to distract my wife from her self-consciousness once we got to our cottage.

"My darling, you were simply miraculous with Charlie! You made being near him seem like nothing when it must have been terribly difficult."

"Could you read his mind? Is he okay? Did you talk to Alice? Can she see whether he'll do anything?" Bella fired questions at me in quick succession.

"Alice thought that Charlie would be fine. She didn't see any red flags, not that I caught, anyway. Charlie is almost as remarkable as you are in his own way. He's tough... and practical. And he loves you. Ready?" I asked, indicating the river. Bella nodded. I dropped her hand, knowing that her stronger legs would carry her farther than me and if I held onto her, I'd either drag her down or she would yank me uncomfortably through the air behind her. Neither outcome would be graceful.

I was right. She sailed into the trees well beyond where I landed. I made up the distance by hitting the ground running, arriving just in time to snatch her out of the air as

she descended. I hooked her legs under my right arm and took off at full speed. I longed to kiss her, but I didn't, because judging by the previous night, we wouldn't get home if I did.

Bella wasn't as restrained—she slipped her hands inside my sweater, stroking my chest and kissing the base of my neck. I growled involuntarily as her smooth palms traced the curves of my muscles. Her lips brushed up my throat and across my jaw as her hands moved lower onto my stomach. I growled a deeper note, the sound rumbling in my chest.

My legs were moving as fast as they could go, but I was in such a hurry to get there that the cottage seemed fifteen or twenty miles further away than it had been when we left it. Though sorely tempted, I refrained from crashing through the solid oak door when we finally arrived. I used the door handle like a civilized person and carried my bride over the threshold. After all, it was our second honeymoon...or the second half of our first honeymoon. Either way you looked at it, it was my heaven on earth.

It took a fraction of a second to get from the front door to our bedroom. The mosquito netting had been swept to the side, so I held Bella to my chest and leaped for the bed from the doorway. Esme had made a good choice of bedframe. When we hit the mattress, the heavy bed did not collapse, but moved on slides across the room and came to a stop against the house's outside wall. Before we'd stopped moving, Bella had ripped my sweater apart with her hands and her teeth. She was one garment ahead of me—while she shredded my khakis, I tore off her t-shirt and wrenched her blue jeans apart. Maybe this was one reason Alice had supplied us with so many clothes. She must have foreseen that we would go through them quickly. Destroying clothing was preferable to collapsing cottages, though. Bella and I were extremely fond of Esme's handiwork.

We tumbled across the huge bed and back, our lips locking together and the shreds of our garments winding around us. I pressed the length of my body against my love while she twined her legs around mine and rolled on top of me. Bella was desperate with desire. She aligned her body with mine, then spread her thighs and began stroking herself against my rigid penis as her mouth moved hungrily down my neck and onto my chest. Her long moan vibrated through my skin.

Bella's pregnancy had left her lovely breasts slightly swollen and that change had remained through her transition, rounding her out a bit more than before. Her nipples were distended for breast-feeding, pale pink on alabaster.

I took her nipples into my mouth, each in turn, sucking and pulling as she stimulated herself against me. With my strength commensurate to her solidity, I was free now...free to simply let loose and love her.

Bella panted raggedly as she sped up her movements. Her eyes were shut and her lips were slightly parted. I stroked her nipples and watched her facial expressions change as she became increasingly excited. When her muscles suddenly went taut, I lifted her hips, positioned myself beneath her and lowered her onto my penis. As I entered her slowly, I felt her orgasm begin. She cried out, as did I, and I lifted and lowered her again and then again. *Ahh!*

She felt so different around me than before her change, comfortably warm, firmer, with more friction between us than before. When she came, her muscles squeezed me more powerfully than they had when she was human. Her pleasure was so thrilling and her body so stimulating that I let go and I climaxed just after her.

“Ahhhhh!” The bed shook from the vibration of my groan. Bella tucked her lips into the side of my throat and kissed me there as I trembled beneath her.

“Bella, my love,” I whispered in her ear when I had recovered sufficiently to speak. I smoothed her hair from her face with both hands.

“I love you,” she murmured and pressed her lips to mine.

Such joy there was here in Heaven! I held her close and gently rolled until she lay on her back beneath me. I chuckled when I suddenly realized two things. Firstly, I hadn’t needed to be so careful. She was no longer fragile. Secondly, if she hadn’t wanted me on top, then I wouldn’t have been able to budge her. For the present, I was completely subject to her strength. I would be helpless to resist her if she wanted this or that. It was a novel thought given how much resisting I’d done before we were married.

“What’s funny?” Bella inquired, but I distracted her with a kiss. I didn’t want to give her any ideas. She would think of it sooner or later, anyway. She seemed to be getting a feel for her strength. Despite her excitement, she hadn’t squeezed me too tightly with her arms, nor pushed against me too hard. She’d kept her power within comfortable bounds.

Before long, I began to move slowly inside of her and Bella responded by lifting her hips to meet mine. After a time, I became aware that the sounds we were making were certain to be audible across the river, where Emmett’s vampire ears undoubtedly were perked up. With any luck, our lust had inspired his, and he and Rose had retired to their room.

Apropos of nothing, I wondered how Jacob coped with his teenage lust. He certainly had been lustful for Bella before he met Renesmee. Since then, I hadn’t detected any behavior toward my daughter that strayed from simple love, concern, and caretaking. And even more surprisingly, he seemed to have no inappropriate thoughts directed toward either my wife or my daughter. It was such a drastic change in Jacob that I was again amazed at how transformative the process of imprinting was.

As I slid gently forward and back, Bella’s hands were everywhere, making long sweeps down my back, cupping my buttocks and stroking between them. I felt myself becoming frenzied as our lips locked together. She wrapped her legs around my back and moaned. *That sound! How I loved that sound!* I leaned over and took her left breast into my mouth and sucked hard. Bella shrieked in pleasure and clamped down around me. *Oh gawd...*

In one swift motion, I was on my feet and Bella’s back was against the stone wall, her legs clasped around my waist—better leverage. I pressed into her and rocked, hearing her hum in my ear, one continuous note, high-pitched, a song of love. I moaned into her; she hummed into me. My lips sought hers—click-clack—warmth to warmth. *Mmm...*

*mmm... mmm...* (When I checked later, none of the stones was dislodged, though the mortar between them was cracked.)

The night passed as rapidly as the previous one. Certain things stood out...the intensely arousing sounds my lover made when I sucked on her nipples, being helpless beneath her when she decided to take control, the expression on her face as I dragged my tongue across her clitoris.

The latter case was a study in pleasure. Her eyes rolled back, her jaw slackened and her lips parted, her breath became frantic. Her cries grew higher in pitch as her excitement built, and she froze for one pregnant moment before she climaxed. Such are the stirring details of making love with Bella that no one but myself will ever know. It's a miracle to me how she allows me so close when she's at her most vulnerable. That kind of intimacy binds you together as nothing else can.

How I loved her! She was my life.

It was past sunrise when we came up for air.

"Edward, is it time?"

"Yes, my darling."

"I don't want to move."

"Mmm..." I brushed my lips down the length of Bella's throat.

"You're not helping..." she whispered.

"No..." I dragged the tip of my tongue across her collarbone, inhaling her sweet scent.

"Somebody's got to be good. Renesmee is probably awake."

"She's awake," I murmured.

"How do you know?"

"Rosalie's thoughts..."

"Edward, you have to help."

I groaned. Bella's fingers were wound through my hair and she pulled my face away from her chest. "Okay, you're right," I conceded.

Still inside her, I rolled us to the edge of the bed. With her legs around my waist and my hands under her buttocks, I stood and carried her to our closet from hell. I didn't try not to bounce her as I walked, and Bella didn't try not to either, so we were delayed another ten minutes on the closet floor before guilt got the better of us and I lifted Bella off of me slowly. When we separated, her vagina made a soft *pop* like a rubber stopper being pulled from a drain and we both chuckled. I repeated the sound with my lips against her neck and we laughed again.

"I hope Emmett didn't hear that," I teased.

"Even if he did, he's not allowed to say a word about it!"

“Under threat of injury?”

“That’s right!”

Bella rose and made her way to the back of the closet where her “real” clothes were located. I jumped up and followed, palming her round bottom. She pulled a fresh pair of blue jeans from the same drawer as yesterday and I noticed that there were only two more pairs stacked there. We’d have to stop ripping each other’s clothes off. Bella found a beige, long-sleeved t-shirt—sadly, not low-cut—and I located some blue jeans and a sweater for myself. In three seconds we were dressed and with one last kiss, we clasped hands and darted out the back door of the cottage.

When we arrived at the house, Renesmee squealed—*squealed?*—and leaned out of Rosalie’s arms, stretching toward Bella.

“Thanks, Rose,” Bella said, reaching for the baby. “We’ll have to get Renesmee’s bedroom set up today.”

“I don’t mind holding her. Neither does anyone else.”

“It’s not your responsibility, though,” Bella said with a grateful smile.

“Are you sure you want her out there with you at night?” Rose inquired, the corners of her mouth twitching.

Bella scowled at her. “Of course. Hey, baby,” she said, turning her attention to Nessie.

I headed to the kitchen to get Renesmee some breakfast while she showed Bella her feelings about us not being there when she woke up and where did we go?

“I’ll take you out to the cottage today. You can pick the colors for your room.”

Esme piped up. “Her furniture is scheduled to arrive from Seattle today. We’ll paint the walls this morning and Alice will probably want to work on Nessie’s closet. Is it okay with you if we take the keys and do that?”

“Yes, of course. That would be wonderful. Thank you. And thank you again for such a wonderful gift. We love the cottage!”

Esme gave Bella a quick hug. “You’re very welcome, dear. We’re so happy that you and Renesmee are part of our family.”

I returned with Nessie’s cup. “Are you thirsty, little one?” I took Renesmee from her mother and she snuggled down in my arms to drink. Bella disappeared into the kitchen. Renesmee touched my throat, wondering why her momma didn’t feed her like everybody else did.

“It makes your momma too thirsty to be near your cup. She might not be able to feed you for a while, but when you’re a little bigger, we’ll take you hunting with us.”

Renesmee seemed to understand my explanation, or at least to accept it. I sang to her while she drank her breakfast and when she was finished, she showed me a picture of Charlie, wanting to know when he was coming.

“He will probably visit in the afternoon, after your next measuring. Do you remember his scent?” I asked, though I already knew it was his most distinguishing feature

in her mind. He made her thirsty. “And you remember that you’re not to bite and not to tell him things with your hand?” She did. We didn’t know whether Renesmee had perfect recall as her parents did, but I was beginning to think so.

Having Renesmee was a huge adventure. I wondered what would be the next surprise she’d present to us. Maybe she would walk or start talking. She found it so natural to communicate with her hand that I didn’t expect the latter to happen for some time. In fact, I wasn’t sure what might compel her to switch from her primary mode of communication. Perhaps she’d want to talk to someone from across a room one day.

Carlisle had measured Renesmee at seven o’clock before her mother and I had come to the house. It couldn’t be called a trend yet, but it looked like her growth rate might be slowing slightly. That would be a great relief.

I took Nessie to the kitchen and found Bella talking to Jacob, who had his head in the refrigerator as usual. It was good that someone was eating our food. Otherwise, it just sat in the kitchen until it got old and had to be thrown out. I moved to the sink to wash Nessie’s cup and Bella took the baby from my arms. Smelling the remains in the cup, she clamped her jaws together and turned to leave the room. I sneaked a quick pat on her behind. *Mmm...* I could not keep my hands off of her today.

“Hey!” Jacob said with his mouth full of roasted chicken. “Your brother said you got Bella a car for her birthday. What’d you get her?”

“Yes, it’s been under a tarp in the garage, but with Charlie showing up yesterday, I didn’t get a chance to give it to her officially. I wanted to wait until you and Seth were here anyway, because Bella is unlikely to appreciate it to the degree that it should be appreciated.” I smiled at him.

“I’m up for it! Let’s go take a look!”

“Where’s Seth? Is he coming by?”

“Yeah, he’s going to escort Charlie over after Sue makes Sunday dinner. She feels sorry for him not having a cook anymore.” He paused to take another bite. “Billy said they had an interesting evening. Charlie’s suspicious about the whole tribe now, wondering what’s what. He didn’t want to know anything about Bella’s deal, but we might have to let him in on who’s a wolf and who’s not. He seems freaked out that anybody could phase at any time. I get the feeling that Sue’s a little sweet on Charlie, so maybe he’ll become an honorary tribe member. *That’ll* be interesting.” Jacob chuckled, imagining Charlie’s discomfort with the Quileute magic.

“So Charlie will get a good dose of the supernatural whether he wants to or not,” I ventured.

“It depends on how close he gets to Sue. She won’t tell him anything unless they get serious or if Seth or Leah accidentally phases around him. It could happen!” Jacob laughed, remembering the look on Charlie’s face the day before. “You know,” he continued, “I think Charlie thought I was making a pass at him when I took him into the woods and pulled down my sweatpants. It was priceless!” He laughed raucously. It *was*

rather hilarious.

I'd already seen the image in Jacob's head, but his thoughts were giving me a little more detail. Charlie had turned white, his jaw had dropped, and he'd started sidling away from Jacob. Probably, he couldn't comprehend how Bella's "illness" had anything to do with Jacob's being gay. I laughed too. Poor Charlie! But he was one tough cop!

"He asked my dad last night whether he was an animal or if Sue was an animal and he was relieved when they both smiled and said no. I guess he didn't think to ask about Sue's kids." Jacob chuckled again. "He absolutely *loves* Nessie, though. I knew he would. He figured out that she looks like Bella, but he's trying not to think about it. He did ask Billy if he knew whether Renesmee was an animal and Billy told him no, though with what Carlisle says, she could be, right?"

"He and I have talked quite a bit about her genetics. She does have the same number of chromosomes as you, but we don't know what that will mean. It could be that the first werewolves were created by the mating of a vampire and a human—"

"NO! NO WAY!" Jacob exploded.

It was such an ingrained thing for him to hate vampires that despite our altered circumstances, he couldn't help himself. I just shrugged. We'd have to wait and see. I left the room to let him recompose himself. In about half a second, he'd realize (again) that Renesmee was half vampire and so he couldn't exactly detest vampires in the same way as he used to. Change was hard. I smiled to myself.

I found Bella and Renesmee looking at some color swatches Esme had fanned out on the conference table.

"Which color do you like best?" Bella asked the baby.

Nessie pointed to yellow with one hand and lavender with the other.

"You want two colors?"

Nessie put her hand to Bella's cheek.

"Okay, then. Does that work for you, Esme?"

"Perfectly," she responded and kissed the baby's cheek. "You will have a very happy room," she told Nessie. Esme gathered the swatches and prepared to go into town for the paint.

"Bella, darling?" I interjected. She turned to me and raised her eyebrows. "Are you ready to see your other birthday present?"

"Oh!" She looked surprised for a moment, having forgotten the car. "Ummm...yes, I guess so."

Alice came dancing down the stairs, pulling Jasper by the hand.

"Let's go, then!" Alice trilled. "I want to see what Bella thinks!"

I put my arm around my wife's waist and directed her and Nessie toward the kitchen and the back door. Jacob followed Alice and Jasper. When we entered the garage, I saw Emmett holding up his jeep by its undercarriage. Rosalie was lying on a dolly with her legs sticking out from beneath it. She rolled out, her hands and blue jeans dotted with oil.

Emmett set the vehicle down and leaped up.

“Shall I pull off the tarp?” he asked excitedly.

“Sure, Em. Are you ready, Bella?”

Bella sighed. “As ready as I’ll ever be.”

“Okay, here goes! Three, two, one...” With a sweep of his hand, Emmett whipped off the canvas tarp like a matador taunting a bull.

“An F430?” Jacob gasped, looking in my direction. “Are you kidding me?!”

I nodded.

“What do you think, Bella?” Alice demanded.

“Umm, wow! It’s really pretty. It looks fast too.” I smiled at her underwhelming, non-comprehending comment. I leaned over and gave her a big smack on the lips. “Happy birthday, my darling!”

“Okay, but this is my *zero* vampire birthday, not my nineteenth human birthday. I am eighteen forever.”

“You are eighteen forever,” I repeated solemnly.

Alice laughed. “Bella, do you even know what this car is?”

“Is it a Porsche?”

Alice smiled. “No...”

“Jaguar?”

“No.”

“Um, Mercedes?”

“No!” Emmett and Rosalie chimed in along with Alice.

“BMW?”

“You’re hopeless, Bells!” Jacob interrupted. “It’s a Ferrari!”

“Oh, wow... Isn’t that a race car?”

“Some people race them, but they’re not just for racing,” I told her.

“Edward, it’s beautiful. Thank you. Jacob?” He was beside her instantly to take the baby. Then she threw her arms around my neck and pressed her lips to mine. What started as a thank you kiss quickly turned into something else. Bella pushed against me with such force that I ended up with my back pancaked against the garage wall. The gypsum board cracked in the shape of my back. Emmett guffawed at my helplessness, his amusement fed by the memory of his humiliating defeat in the arm-wrestling match. I didn’t mind at all. I just gave her everything I had.

“Ahem,” Jacob uttered censoriously. “There are children in the room.”

Bella separated herself from me abruptly.

“Oops,” she whispered, smiling. “You okay?”

“Much better than okay. Do you want to drive your new car?”

“Sure, but you know, it’s not exactly a family car. It only has two seats.”

“Yes, I had no idea there would be three of us when I chose it,” I responded. “I guess we won’t be using it for family outings. We’ll put a car seat in the Volvo.”

“I’ll look after Nessie while you’re gone,” Jacob announced. “Ness? You wanna go feed some squirrels in the woods?” Renesmee smacked her palm against his neck. Yes, she did. She really enjoyed getting close to the wildlife with Jacob. It was not something she could do with any of the rest of us and he knew it. I wondered briefly how we were going to transition her to hunting and “eating” the wildlife. As soon as she could walk, we’d need to take her hunting with us unless she developed a taste for human food in the meantime. So far, she hadn’t shown any signs of it.

I took Bella’s hand, pulled her to the driver’s side of the car, and opened the door for her.

“Holy crow!” she gasped, looking into the car’s beige interior. She stroked the soft leather seat. “Is it an automatic?”

“No, it has shift paddles here.” I indicated the high-end gear shifts on the steering column. “It’s semi-automatic. There is no clutch and you don’t have to take your hands off the wheel to change gears.”

“Well, that’s pretty cool. It has a ‘Start’ button?” she asked as she sat down in the low seat and put her hands on the wheel.

“Yes, you put your foot on the brake, make sure you’re in ‘Park,’ and press the button. The car recognizes its own key. You don’t even need to use it as long as the key fob is in your pocket.”

“Awesome!” Jacob interjected.

“You know, Edward, I can’t really drive it anywhere. Everybody will stare.”

“That’s what the tinted windows are for,” I replied, smiling.

“I’ll still have to take your car to the store and stuff. I don’t want to have another one of those incidents like I had with the last car. Hey! Where *is* the tank-proof wonder, anyway?”

“The Mercedes Guardian? Carlisle hired a driver to return it to its owner. Why? Do you miss it?”

“Ugh, no! I think this one might be worse, though. It’s bright red!”

I chuckled. “Don’t you like the color?”

“No, I mean, yes, it’s really pretty, but it’s so...loud.”

“I thought you might appreciate having a new car in the same color as your old one. And you know, everybody stared at that truck too because it was vintage and...well...loud.” I tried to keep my smile restrained. She stuck out her tongue. “So, shall we go?”

“Okay, but you’ll have to teach me how to drive this thing.”

“I’m not worried. Once you know what all the buttons are for, you won’t have any problem handling a Ferrari. You and Alice could even do some street racing if you wanted to.”

“Oh yes, let’s!” Alice exclaimed, clapping her hands.

Bella rolled her eyes. I winked at my sister and shut the car door.

Bella mastered the controls easily and we drove south past Tacoma, then Olympia,

and then Portland, Oregon, after which the population density decreased. She didn't max out the engine, but she did hit 150 miles per hour, which was pretty good for a first run. I was gratified by her grin. She seemed to enjoy the speed as I thought she might, post-change.

Eventually, I reminded Bella that Charlie was coming to see her and we turned around to head back north. I hadn't wanted Charlie around for the unveiling because the car would distract Bella when she needed to concentrate on handling her father's presence.

No doubt everybody would be waiting to test drive the Ferrari when we returned. We had a lot of nice cars on the Cullen estate, but new specimens were always ogled and fawned over.

Somewhere on our way back up the Olympic Peninsula, Bella found an abandoned logging road and turned onto it. The car wasn't designed for bumpy dirt tracks, but it held the road well, even at 110 miles per hour. Pretty impressive.

When she reached the end of the marginal roadway, she stopped the car and turned off the engine. Before I knew what was happening, she had ejected herself from her seat and landed in my lap facing me. It was a lovely idea, but there's one thing a Ferrari is not and that's a love-mobile. The car was designed for speed, not for assignations of any sort.

My wife and I ended up in the forest with certain items of clothing folded neatly over a tree branch. After all, we couldn't come home with shredded clothes. It would be unseemly.