

Isle Esme

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Chapter 1 to 2

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Isle Esme: Part One

There is something to be said for solitude in general. For me, solitude is not a method of relaxation or mediation; it is my only refuge. Refuge from the sea of voices, images and thoughts that consistently swarm inside of my head. As constant as the sunrise, each day is fresh with new assaults on my defensive barriers. I do block them, true. But that monumental task requires concentration and diligent focus. Frequently, the focus becomes so consuming that it defines me. And so, it is also just as true that for me, mental silence, which is essential to concentration, can only be obtained by placing myself in the remotest of places. And now, more than ever I needed both silence and concentration. For me. For Bella. For the inevitability of our situation.

So, for this reason I'd opted out of Alice's grand plans for a Parisian honeymoon with Bella, Carlisle's thoughtful suggestions of Tuscany, and even Bella's assumed preferred simple getaway to a nice Seattle hotel. And for this reason, I had chosen Isle Esme.

Here, in secluded paradise, I could stand in the water, in the moonlight, and let down my defenses completely. Here, I could triumph over distraction and focus without feeling the consuming need to protect myself from the intrusion of others. And tonight, I would need that peace and that clarity more than I'd ever needed anything. Tonight, my success or failure was paramount, as Bella's life depended upon it. I was uncertain still, but at least in the silence, I felt more assured than I possibly could have anywhere else. And with that encouragement, I would find the courage to fulfill my end of a bargain made so long ago. A bargain made with Bella. Bella...

I closed my eyes in quiet appreciation of the feelings her name conjured within me. I smiled as I thought of a most exquisite memory: Bella on our wedding day. I chuckled at the remembered detail of her flushed cheeks. My memory was just as exquisite as the reality had been; she'd been a vision of unparalleled beauty as she'd walked towards me. I had tried desperately to restrain from outwardly showing my deep, unyielding joy, but my resolve crumbled when our eyes met. It had seemed as if she had been searching for me. I'd been unable to hold back my ridiculous smile. Her gaze was so alive with emotion. She'd looked at me with a devoted tranquility so pure that I had been sure then that never had I seen such beauty.

Caught and enraptured, for too long I had stood there utterly lost in the message of love she'd wordlessly conveyed to me in that moment. She'd looked so beautiful, so radiant, and so confident. It was then that I'd felt the surge of the yearning, the adoration, and the passionate love for her that I hoped to harness responsibly tonight. For in our short ceremony, she'd given her word and her hand to me in marriage, fulfilling my dreams, my hopes and my deepest desires. And now - it was time for me to reciprocate.

For all she had given me, all of the joy, purpose, love and adoration, this was my one opportunity to give her what she wanted: me.

The cheer generated by my memory dissipated at that reminder. Sighing in resignation, I tried to focus on the wide, permanent Moon. It was a feeble attempt. It would be foolish to convince myself that I felt anything short of terrified. The whole situation was tragically uncertain. I needed to clear my mind. I knew exactly where my thoughts were headed; straight to my fears and anxieties. Fears and anxieties that always began with passionate pleasure and ended in a lifeless, broken Bella.

I shuddered at the image. My need for a distraction was intensified. With concentration, I forced myself to focus on both Bella's heartbeat and my most recent source of comfort of Alice's vision.

She was even more radiant than ever as she smiled and giggled. We were together and laying in the sunshine. I was sparkling openly, but it made no difference. We were alone and we were kissing each other slowly, happily. We both looked so peaceful.

It was my wedding gift of sorts. And it was Bella.

It was over then, but I held on to it, lingering on the details Alice had brought to my attention. From the vision, it was clear that the image was from several days into our honeymoon because Bella's usually alabaster skin had a tint of a tan to it. "You won't kill her," Alice had told me. Sourly, I had told Alice that her visions held no guarantees. She'd rolled her eyes, knowing for certain that I would use that vision in the future and muttered that I'd "thank her for it later." She probably saw me using it now.

I barked a laugh and then immediately looked back towards the house. I hoped Bella didn't hear that. I couldn't resist though.

I smiled and whispered into the silence. "Alice - if you can see me now...thank you for that vision. And, thank you for being such a fantastic sister. And now, kindly, get out of my honeymoon..." I chortled again at my own snide payback. I could only hope somehow she'd see it.

Ah, my mood was lightening. The overbearing weight of my anxiety had lifted a little, and although it wasn't as heavy as before, I could feel it slowly returning. I inhaled the fragrant ocean air once more, exhaling it in a rush of anxiety, hoping to mitigate the return of my uncertainty. It calmed me slightly. Closing my eyes again, I tilted my head towards the glowing moonlight, focusing intently now on letting the strong sound of Bella's automatic life fill my world. It reverberated everything; strong and determined. But...not nervous? This unnerved me as I listened closely. Her heartbeat was faster than usual, but steady nonetheless.

I shuddered as I considered that I, the creature of immortality, might be the only party to this dangerous endeavor that had any reservations. No, surely not. Instinctively, I looked back towards the house. She had yet to emerge, but she was preparing. She had to be at least slightly nervous or anxious. This was her night.

Selfishly, I tightened my hearing, listening to not just her heartbeat, but the pattering of her soft

feet on the floor of the house. At first, I heard nothing indistinguishable. But then, after several moments, slowly and gradually, I received my selfish reassurance. She was still running water, undoubtedly preparing to come and meet me. And...her heart was speeding.

I was relieved. Chuckling, I imagined her flushed expression when she would surely see Alice's packed lingerie. I'd told Alice not to do anything to embarrass Bella, but Alice was full of snarky reassurance. She'd quite simply informed me that it was none of my business and that my intrusion on this part of their feminine agreement was rude and inappropriate. I'd glowered at her and she'd smirked back, knowing she'd had me beat. It was only later that I had discovered they had no arrangement. Once again, what Alice wanted, Alice got. Poor Bella. If anything were to turn her off to immortality it would be Alice's insistence on dressing her as if she were some play doll. Forever.

I heard Bella sigh and in response I snapped my head again to the house. She *was* taking a while. Was she more than just nervous? Was she scared? Should I run to the house to check on her? Bella's water stopped then and my own nervousness increased with anticipation. Okay, she wouldn't be long now...

I forced myself to breathe deeply. Again, as a small wave crashed against my immovable frame, I concentrated on the sensations generated by the trillions of microscopic particles of water that trickled down my body as the water passed me. "Don't be a coward" I heard her mutter. I grinned at that. *Oh, Bella*. She was far from cowardly. Her little heart was flying now. So quick, in fact, that the constant thumping completely drowned out the waves pushing in from the massive ocean. I let out a breath I didn't realize I was holding. How would we make it through this? It was as if there was too much unresolved passion and tension between us; we desired one another too much.

Truly, I was confident that I could determine the range of my self-control. I knew the depth of my love for Bella, and I was perfectly aware that although the dictates of my body and my rational mind were at odds, they had agreed long ago about the inevitability of this situation. The inevitability of Bella and her needs. Needs she'd had since we'd first entered each other's lives...we could no longer wait.

Abruptly, a memory entered my mind. It was me rushing through the forest, headed away from the meadow with Bella snugly wrapped around me. That had been right before I'd kissed her for the first time. Frowning, I chuckled at that memory. It seemed as if it were just yesterday and yet, we'd come so far. How wild I was with her, how unpracticed and undisciplined! Especially in comparison my behavior now... I had grown tremendously in a short time. All because of Bella. How truly improved I was now.

I couldn't help but consider that thought further. One day, with practice, would making love to her be as simple as standing in her presence? At one time being near her scent alone drove me to nearly take her life, but I'd persevered. Would this be similar?

It was a question I couldn't answer. And, truthfully, I was not entirely immune to her scent and to claim otherwise was unrealistic. Her scent still hit me, I was still aware of it, and it still teased

my senses, but it was so easily conquered now compared to the force with which it had initially threatened my sanity. It was if my instinct and urge to take her blood were now only resurrected under duress, such as if I were to hunt near her. And even then...would I truly be so far gone that I would.

No, those instincts were eclipsed somehow by a rival set of instincts and desires. They were just as impulsive, just as dangerous, and just as unbridled as my thirst for her blood had been for so long after we'd fallen in love. The instinct for her body, which was not just physical. There were fierce emotions tied to that element of our relationship, bringing unrivaled intensity. My need to please Bella, to make her happy, to reward her for her patience, her unwavering loyalty and love, and her sacrifices. Perhaps the force of both the physical and emotional compulsions to please her were the reason behind the complete subjugation of my vampiric instincts?

Another unanswerable question. But, this was not a new consideration. I discovered this new reversal of instinct one night as Bella and I, once again, were pushing our boundaries in her bedroom. It had become too much and I'd pulled away, leaving her waiting, as always. Regaining my composure, I understood that no longer was the intense desire for her blood leaving me impulsively surging towards her in violent compulsions. It was the call for her body and the scent of her arousal that was pushing me now. It had become a new, curious torture; much like her blood taunted my vampiric instincts to kill, her arousal was now taunting my lustful human desires to make her mine.

At first, the moment my brain had placed this new realization together, I had gasped to myself and smiled a wide grin, feeling elated at the realization that somehow my thirst for her blood had been beaten back. She'd looked back at me in confusion and the moment I'd caught her eyes, I kissed her again, testing myself. Nothing. No new washes of venom, no stinging, or burning scorches of fire. Of course, as always, she'd then thrown herself at me kissing, touching, and pulling my hair wildly. I had kissed her back ferociously until I'd heard her whimper. And, it was then that I'd realized my new problem.

My call for her blood was diminished, true, but replaced by this intensified need for her body; one that could threaten her life in the same way. By my loss of control. And, as soon as my grin had plastered itself on my face in elation and satisfaction, it had been replaced by my sulking frown. Bella had been thoroughly confused, undoubtedly by the rapid shift in my mood, but I had explained that I would tell her when she'd changed. Only then would she understand. The last thing she needed was a confession that would surely encourage her further. She was already tempting enough. It was manipulative, but she'd let it go and I made a promise to myself to explain to her one day.

But that night, as she'd fallen asleep, I had begun to panic in the face of this new terror. I had always known I could break her in a fit of passion, but I had been able to control that side of my needs in the face of a stronger call to keep her safe, to keep her alive. This wasn't a surprise, but a disappointment. Because, it seemed obvious to me then, as the instinct for her blood receded, this new threat grew in strength. And just as my thirst had called for her blood encouraging my teeth and venom to take her...now, my thirst for her body, my own instinctual need to feel her, love her, and make her mine surged in a similar fashion. Only their method of pursuit was not

venom, but impulsive action. Impulsive action that would leave me defenseless and unaware of the demonstration or wielding of my physical strength until it was too late. It was the one final way in which I could still lose...lose myself, lose her, lose our future...

Immediately, I'd sought Carlisle that night after she'd fallen asleep. He'd been amazed by the new revelation when I had told him that I'd felt an odd immunity begin to form, protecting me against the force of her singing blood. He'd delighted in hearing this news knowing that it meant I would have less of a challenge in being with her. And then, he'd sensed something was wrong. After expressing my concerns, he even admitted it was always, by far, his greatest fear. He had believed all along that I was strong enough - good enough - to resist her blood, but dealing with my strength was an entirely new problem. One he'd never truly wanted to explore with me as he'd known I understood my own nature and did not wish to add to my worries.

Such was the reality then...and now. I didn't want to drink her into lifelessness as my dormant instincts urged. But now, I could simply kill her by pure accident. One slip... one careless slip...

My breath was quickening with anxiety and I frowned at my own idiocy. This was not negotiable. Worrying was senseless. I had made her a guarantee. I could do this... I could. *I had a duty to her... and, I wanted her too... it was only right, only natural now that we were now together... husband and wife... forever... she'd given me so much, surely, I was not so selfish that I could control myself in such a way to give her the one thing she wanted besides standing by my side for eternity...*

As if to rescue me, I heard her walk from the landing into the sand where she stopped. *Thank you, Bella.* She was rustling something and I froze. Was she undressing? I wasn't sure. I didn't want to turn; she would need her privacy as well. But, I could still imagine her soft feet stuck in the sand, her long legs ascending higher to her hips and her tiny waist...

So quickly, she was walking again and I reeled to move away the emotions, thoughts and memories as I prepared to meet her. *No longer negotiable,* I told myself. I took a deep breath and glanced up at the silent Moon, praying for that heavenly being to provide me with the strength that I needed for Bella. I would do anything for her, anything to keep her safe, and anything to hold on to my control.

Perhaps I was drawing the wrong conclusions? Surely, it was true I desired her more than I should, but I was also strong - I could be strong for her in this way, couldn't I? I glanced down at the water hoping then that if I could hold still, steadfast, and true against the breaking tide of a giant ocean, propelled with force by the dictates of the silent Moon, so giant and so absolute, that I could hold fast now.

Sighing quietly, I placed my hands along the top of the moving water and closed my eyes in anticipation as I heard her take her first tiny step into the water. Before I could even feel her warmth, she glided towards me, sending her scent, heavy and warm floating around us. There was a faint trickle of venom, but nothing more. It disintegrated in my mouth entirely on its own. Surely that was something.

I heard her heart then, also wild and unrestrained. She came to an unstable stop next to me and I immediately relaxed further in her calming presence. She felt so good standing next to me, with me. The left side of my body became warmer with her presence. I didn't look at her yet, as I was still partially absorbed in my own quiet musings, bargaining in vain with the Moon.

"Beautiful..." She muttered as her small hand reached out to me. She placed it silently on the top of mine. For some reason her word triggered in my memory again my comforting image from Alice's mind of Bella lying with me on the sand. Her long mahogany hair twisted wet and wild around her shoulders, her eyes, so wide and trusting looking into mine. *That* was beauty.

"It's all right," I murmured, slowly reaching for her hand. The focused on the sensations of her wet skin against mine as our fingers wrapped.

I felt her body shift in the sand. The impulse to help her surged, but I refrained, fearful that I would embarrass her, or myself. We were both modest by nature and for the first time, we were both nude in the presence of one another. The realization again sent a wash of anxiety and excitement through me. But, truthfully, I was desperate to see her, desperate to compare that image to her now. Slowly, I turned towards her, longing for the strength I hoped I could find from her eyes. I steadied myself, refusing to allow my instincts for her body to stray my eyes downward. I had nothing to worry about.

As soon as our gaze met, I was taken back again by her staggeringly beautiful and wide expression that was filled with trust for me. Her soft, pale skin glowed wonderfully in the moonlight. The hot shower had turned her warm, moist skin an even brighter shade of pink. Beautiful Bella. There *was* no comparison.

"But, I wouldn't use the word beautiful," I amended, restraining myself from reaching out to touch her soft pink cheek. "Not with you standing here in comparison."

She smiled a sweet, loving smile and shifted a little towards me. Her hand rose from underneath the water as she watched her own hand rest on my chest. A steady stream of warm water cascaded down my body and I shuddered at the sensation. Her warmth, her beauty, the water, it was all so much. I wanted desperately to close my eyes, to relish the memory, but I couldn't look away from her eyes. There was something else in them - they were confident.

A rush of gratitude flooded me. I was terrified; she knew it, but her eyes weren't wavering from mine in the slightest. I felt the need to speak to her, reassure her that I was under control and would need her help in maintaining restraint. I couldn't do it without her. I took an unsteady breath.

"I promised we would *try*." I whispered, unsure if my shaky tone was apparent in her ears, "If...if I do something wrong, if I hurt you, you must tell me at once."

She nodded in quiet reassurance and intensified her gaze on mine acknowledging that she understood my fear, my torturous resignation, and my careful resolve. I felt her body shift again as she took a step towards me, her foot pushing into the sand. As her body pulled closer to mine,

the warmth and her scent enveloped the space between us entirely, sending desire and want surging within me. Her heart was thudding loudly, louder than I'd ever heard it. Should I tell her how terrified I was? I didn't want to ruin the moment, but it was only right that she know.

Before I could speak, slowly, with her right hand over my heart and her small left hand still in my fingers, she moved forward another inch and laid her head on my chest. I closed my eyes at the sensations generated by her closeness. The gesture was staggeringly genuine. It felt more intimate than anything I had ever experienced. She was so brave... I would never forgive myself if I hurt her...

"Don't be afraid," She murmured. "we belong together."

The sincerity, the affection, and the staggering truth of her words rang in my ears. I suddenly felt the need to hold her closer, pull her closer, but I hesitated. I wanted to touch her so badly, but if I began to give in to my impulses now, could I stop? But, on the other hand, if I could not touch her now, like this, with affection and sincerity, could I even do what I would eventually want and need to do?

I had no true choice. I had to trust her. I had to try to trust myself.

Slowly, I moved my arm and placed it directly beneath her shoulder. I kept my other hand intertwined in hers. And, I held her. Close, closer than ever before. She was all I'd ever wanted and in that moment I understood her pleas of immortality. The very idea of spending a moment of my existence without her was crushingly intolerable. I resisted against the urge to release the flow of words that were desperate to leave me and settled on the one word I knew she wanted to hear above all others.

"Forever." I agreed.

In response to my acknowledgement her pulse quickened infinitesimally, thudding loudly in my ears. It was not a nervous sound; it was in response to the absolution conveyed through my statement. An unspoken truce reached, right here, in this moment. She sighed contentedly into my chest. The sound was so reassuring. Overcome by the enormity of our love, the gravity of the situation, and the unforgivable desire I had for her, I moved back slightly into the water with her pressed close to me. As I took those first two steps, she looked up from my chest and smiled another sweet smile before she wrapped her hands around my back.

I loved the feeling of her hands on me, of her body so close, so intimate. I wanted to kiss her. The skin of her shoulders glistened and glowed in the beautiful, soft moonlight. She looked up at me again and in fascination, I watched her lips part slightly in anticipation. I leaned down and gave in, kissing her sweetly. I was in control, but I still paused for a second, searching her eyes before moving my lips against hers again. She was alert and willing to walk me through this. And, for once, she didn't push me further. She was restraining herself.

I touched her lips with mine again and didn't break our sweet kissing as I continued to take careful steps backwards, dragging us deeper into the calming water. I steadied my grip on her

body and kissed her a little harder as I caught sight of her wild hair around us, now partially floating in the ocean. I had the fleeting desire to reach out and pull it to my mouth so I could taste and smell its luxurious scent. But I didn't want to break away from her mouth.

Her feet left the ocean floor and I loved that she was entirely dependent on me for our course, trusting me to go at my own pace. We roamed a little deeper and she pressed herself further to me and changed her position without breaking our kiss. She wrapped her arms around my neck, clasping her warm hands into my hair. My breath hitched against her mouth as she pulled our bodies completely parallel, closing the distance between us entirely. I opened my eyes, sure of what she must have felt then. She met my gaze and her beautiful eyes widened at the feel of my arousal pressing against her bare skin. Shyness washed over me for a second, but I pushed it away. There would be no room for that now.

And then, so quick for a human, she pushed her mouth into mine further. I kissed her back gentler than I wanted to, but my restraint had the opposite effect on her and her kisses grew desperate. She whimpered into my mouth and I relented slightly as I slid my hand from her shoulder to her hair, tangling its soft strands into my fingers. I pulled her closer, deepening our kiss, and pushing her further against my arousal. I had wanted her to feel it for so long. Her soft breasts were pressed against my chest and I ached to touch them, to see them, to taste her skin there. If her lips tasted this wonderful...

My breathing picked up in concert with hers as I struggled to rationalize around this new intense instinct. I was in control, but I still had the fleeting, dangerous impulse to lift her from the water underneath to bring this new, undiscovered skin to my lips so that I could taste her, kiss her and touch her how I wished. I shook the thought away with an unnecessary flick of my head and she didn't seem to notice. But those urges just proved I would need to exercise better control. I knew this, and yet it was so difficult to focus on controlling anything with her next to me this way. I could feel every inch of her palpitating skin. Her curves molded to me and the hot rhythm of her pulse shook me with every strike, holding a beat I wanted to move in time with. I slowed down, steadying our pace as my inclination to follow the song intensified. Instead, I was patient and kissed her slowly and sweetly as we floated in the warm water.

And then suddenly, in a movement meant to satiate her desire to be closer to me, I felt her shift her weight and tighten her pull against my hair. She bounded a little upwards as if she were hopping...*no*...

She was going to try to wrap her legs around my waist and...I wanted her to. I saw it as if it were reality flash in my mind - the feeling of the warm water would be even more pleasant and she surely wouldn't get cold. Bella was halfway towards completing her hop as my delayed impulse-driven imagination conjured a second spectacular image. I could see it with vivid clarity: Bella's head thrown back in ecstasy as I kissed her breasts, sucking her soft skin, her long wet hair tangled in my hands as it clung to her back, and her moans and cries as I slowly entered her warm body for the first time...

No...not here...not this way...

I nearly groaned in restraint, but I shook my head again, dispelling the images. I held her closer, feeling my stronger desire intensify against her body. I told myself it was the best method of keeping her stationary. She sighed, either aware that I'd delayed her intentions, or silently acquiescing to my admonishment. I realized then that we were crossing too many barriers too quickly and suddenly my midnight swim idea seemed a little *foolish*. I had completely removed any advantage I would have had by slowly removing her clothing, taking my time, and concentrating on each step diligently, enabling myself to constantly assess my ability to control my urges and my strength. It seemed now that I had irresponsibly thrown myself headfirst into an irreversible course, only making this task, which I desperately wanted to be successful, even more difficult.

I broke away from her kissing and stretched my neck back slightly. Carefully, I steadied her with my right hand and she pulled away, sensing my reticence. The look on her face was stunning. I wrapped my hand around right cheek to cement her expression to memory thoroughly. I almost groaned again at the sight of her desire for me. She was *ready*. Her eyes were heavily lidded and lustful. She seemed unfocused and distant. Her pillowy lips were swollen and soft in the moonlight. My entire being ached to be near her in every possible way.

“Bella...” I stroked her cheek. She seemed to blink and focus. “Bella, we must take this slowly. I think we should go inside. Do you agree?” I breathed, barely able to control my new found strength from breaking and cracking into a thousand pieces. She nodded, unable to speak. She was so strong, so trusting. She met her lips to mine as I began to move. Her mouth felt so wonderful and warm and I let the heat and the beat of her heart reverberate through my entire body. I could not force myself to break our kiss as I walked from the ocean. I was still in control and the power was gratifying for now. I would hold on to it. *I can do this*, I told myself. *I can assuage her need, our need...*

I took diligent steps toward the small outer landing of the house one at a time, moving upwards against the slightly sloping sand, stepping in time with her heart. I did not need to open my eyes to sense the entrance of the doorway and as I crossed it, but there was something symbolic in the movement. As if I needed to focus on the sobering responsibility that came with this permanent step. The reminder that there was no turning back hit me hard, but it did not intensify my fear. Only my determination.

The strong, warm breeze from the ocean blew against my back as I took another calculated step through the door, entering the large, white room. Another breeze. And then, another. The air was warm and fragrant, providing temporary refreshment from the power of her luxurious scent, which became stronger as we continued to enjoy the new sensations and the intimacy between us.

As soon as I was in the room, the low light of the bedroom seeped through, but I still could not open my eyes. I didn't want to stop kissing her, the wonderful sensations I was feeling in response to our passionate intimacy were incredible. The warmth of everything took over my entire experience. Her hands were all over my hair, pulling against me softly as I moved towards the bed. She moved her soft lips to my neck and those quick impulses to take her as mine, that instinctual need to claim her as my love surged at the feeling of her against me in such a way. I

had to push them back. We both needed time; otherwise the passion could lead to senseless abandon. Heedless acquiescence was akin to taking her on the hunt. Unrestrained and dangerous.

I reached the bed and deliberated on how best to situate her. It was a dilemma I'd failed to consider. I would either have to set her flat on her feet and forgo the overwhelming pleasurable feeling of her next to me, or I would have to alter my hold on her soft, warm body in order to pull her legs up and lay her down. The latter course of action would do more damage to my restraint. I would see her entire naked form, pale, delicate, throbbing. Her heightened scent would crash over me, surging me forward. Could I handle that yet? My uncertainty was frightening.

I needed to act however, so I chose the former. I would restrain myself from looking, because if I were to do this, I would need her eyes to keep my focus, and I would need to work slowly. I broke away from her kiss and she opened those exquisite brown lashes, unveiling for me a gaze that burned with lust. She blinked, the desire in her eyes pulled back slightly as she gazed at me. I had her attention. Slowly, and without breaking our eyes, I set her down. As her feet touched the warm floor, she gasped softly in anticipation.

I took in a breath that was too ragged, the sound of it in my ears made me feel ridiculous. Did she sense my fear, my insecurity?

“Bella...” I hoped my voice did not sound to her as a plea.

“Edward...we'll go slow...” she whispered. Her eyes were strong, encouraging. I would never forget their look, especially if I hurt her, or lost cont-...

“Edward,” she whispered again, interrupting my thoughts. “Please, don't worry. We will go slow.” As she spoke, she removed her right hand from its grasp around my neck, placing her hand on my left cheek.

“It's okay.” She breathed, reaching on her toes to kiss me again, soft and firm.

I shuddered at the warmth of her touch, the tenderness in her gesture. With her support, I could do this. I nodded my head and grinned at her sweet encouragement. She did sense my nervousness.

“I know, love. Thank you.” I whispered, as I kissed her eyelids, feeling more thankful than ever that she was mine.

It was time. With a deep breath, I took her lips against mine again and wrapped my arm around the length of her back as my other braced against the bed. In one long glide, I angled her across the soft sheets, pulling her with me. I settled her on her back and laid at her side, and immediately it felt as if our bodies were stuck together: hot and cold. As we kissed, she began to run her tongue along the edge of my lips and I moaned quietly at the sensation. The warmth sent tingling sensations down my face and throat. The heat of *her* was incredible, delightful. And her scent...with her so close, so many desires swirled in a chaotic storm of need.

We kissed tenderly, each of us dedicated to our new found patience. Nevertheless, we were boiling with lust beneath the surface. I could feel it in our touch, in our lips, in our breathing, which even for me was becoming erratic and deep. I wanted her badly, but I wanted to go slowly. And what now? She would wait for my cue.

Without another thought, I kissed her deeper knowing she wanted more, breaking the careful tenderness she'd established, relishing the way her mouth still molded against my hard lips. I wrapped my arms around her tiny waist, around her back and pulled myself closer towards her. She moaned at the feeling of my arousal against her hip and I groaned back in anticipation as the warmth of her mouth and the intensity of our mutual desire seemed to permeate our kiss and our touch. I wanted to be inside of her. The urge was natural and it would be so pleasurable. She grasped my neck anxiously and I became weak with passion, fear, anxiety, want, desire. There were too many emotions, too many things to consider, too much to concentrate on. As if she sensed my conflict she grasped my hair tightly and pulled my head towards her. I wanted to touch her and there was no better time to begin.

I moved my hand down from her neck and touched the rise of her skin at her shoulder. She pushed herself forward again and kissed me harder. In a fit of instinct, I could no longer hold back the urge to look at her. I steadied myself and opened my eyes as I pulled away from her mouth. My imagination had entertained the thought of her bare hundreds of times in various states of undress, but there was no comparison. The moonlight cast a glow on her body and as I turned my eyes downward, I was able to truly appreciate her beauty for the first time. She was so soft and perfect, curved and feminine. My breathing stopped as I took her in. She was *mine*.

Officially, irrevocably and eternally. She was my wife, my mate forever. A fit of possessiveness struck me, encouraging me to touch her, kiss her, taste her again now. She belonged to me and I wanted to claim her as mine. She sighed as I began to kiss her with firm, purposeful kisses. I wanted every part of her on me, with me, next to me. I kissed her harder and she pulled even closer. Still it was not enough and I needed to touch more of her. She must have been feeling the same way because as soon as I moved my arm underneath her to free my other, she pulled herself even closer to me, providing me access in any way that I wanted. And I wanted access to her.

Carefully, I allowed myself to continue to kiss her neck, taking my time, with breaths between each kiss. But, I was still all over her, unable to refrain from feeling and tasting her beautifully crafted jawline and soft skin of her ear to the line of her neck. Her skin was so fine, it seemed etched in ivory as she extended it backwards for my pleasure. I sucked and tasted her skin slowly and greedily, gasping at her flavor and scent. She moaned when my tongue teased her skin. Everything about her consumed all of my faculties and I could concentrate on nothing but her body and her warmth and her sounds.

I kissed her shoulder as she arched her back, willing me to continue. The faster pulse of her vein inspired a small trickle of venom that I dissipated immediately. My desire for her, on the other hand, was intensifying even further as I began aching for her. Her pulse was driving me forward, encouraging me to surrender to that rhythm of her. Her life force demanding that I succumb to

her. I stayed firm, though.

I moved down to her collarbone again and I shuddered against her skin as she sighed once more, so unsteadily. She wrapped her hands into my hair even tighter and began to push me downward. I looked up at her, to assess if she was still stable and breathing. She was so flushed. And I was shocked to see that she was watching my every movement through lidded eyes. I continued, moving down slightly so that my hands and my eyes were now focused on her body. The life underneath my fingertips pulsed in small rises with each beat of her heart.

As I came to a carefully calculated stop with my hand just barely touching her breast, I found myself immediately absorbed and fascinated by the new beauty that was this fresh, succulent skin. The way the soft tip of her breast rose discreetly from its base infatuated me. My hand shook a little as I traced from her collarbone to her tender peak, completely awed by the slight tremors created by the thud of her mysterious, beautiful heart. The heat of her skin warmed my fingers and I shuddered with restraint. She gently arched her back again into my touch as I continued to trace her. I resisted each urge to grasp her breasts and bring them to my mouth. I wanted to show her I'd wanted this for so very long. But I focused.

Her gesture of enjoyment encouraged my desires for her, but I had to proceed. I concentrated on touching her silky skin again carefully, absorbing the motions with my hand. The vibrations were so incredible and I shivered as the reverberating warmth moved from my fingertips to my shoulder. The rhythm was intensified when my full hand was on her completely. It was *life*.

She began to sigh more frequently as I moved my hand to the soft bud of her breast. I touched this new, intriguing texture with my fingertips. I found myself in awe of this skin, which was different than any other part of her. She whimpered again and I closed my eyes at the sound. It was pleasurable for her too.

I continued to trace her skin with just the slightest pressure. She enjoyed that immensely and I memorized the touch and feel of this skin. It puckered under my finger so easily. So fragile and dainty. If this new skin, this new uncharted territory felt so wonderful, I could only imagine what she tasted like.

Isle Esme: Part Two

The urge to taste her began to culminate into absolute need. With caution, I began to desensitized myself as much as possible. I hovered over her just slightly so that I could trace her skin with my nose once more. Her colorful scent inundated me as I drew invisible lines from the top of her ribs, over her soft breast and down to her chest again. Her scent was more powerful, more delicate on the intoxicating skin that rarely saw exposure to the elements. The sound of her quick anxious breath heightened my own anxiety as I traced her again. It wasn't her fault, though.

We'd practiced with touching, but never with our mouths. She was surely anxious for me to proceed, but caution was essential. I was still dangerous.

So, I proceeded with great care to lower my lips to the soft bud of her breast. I brushed my lips once across her peak, testing my resistance. Immediately, the fabulous texture and finite complexity of that skin seized my attention. The complicated texture gathered so perfectly to form the brittle, beautiful apex of her breast. Bella gasped when she registered my movement. Our eyes met, but I closed them briefly, stunned by the lust in her eyes. She was waiting and watching my every move.

And I still felt in control. I'd made it so far with her already. The realization that we'd crossed so many boundaries and yet were still both exercising this caution empowered me. Bella was going to be patient so that I could work slowly to make myself safe for her. I steadied myself and lowered my waiting lips to her breast. I knew I would have to indulge quickly to avoid irrational urges. So, with careful diligence, I hovered over her chest and braced myself for the delightful torture. Every sense became trained on my mouth in caution and in anticipation. I slowly drew the inside of my lower lip along her warm skin carefully absorbing as much of her skin as possible. The tingle of her taste and the warmth generated by her skin began to permeate my mind, tickling my lips and face with her heat.

I tasted her then, groaning automatically with the flavor so intensified by this untainted skin. She was more sensational than I'd conceived. Quick breaths charged from me until I had myself firmly regulated. Immediately, I wanted to repeat my successful adventure. And as Bella had just begun to register the sensation my cool lips had given her; she let a soft moan escape and wrung her hands into my hair. I closed my eyes at the sound of her pleasure. Her unspoken request for more echoed in the quiet room and in my head, increasing my need with each repeating. I saw myself letting my tongue slip between my teeth to tease her skin. I could only imagine the pleasure the temperature difference would bring her. I wanted to draw her skin into my mouth. But, I refrained.

I kissed her skin once more with my lips slightly opened, allowing my mouth to fill with the taste of her. Softly she arched her back off of the bed with the leverage she gained from wrenching her hands into my hair. I withdrew. She could not pull me down, but she could pull herself up. It was not worth the risk of exposing her skin to my teeth. She met my eyes and I issued her a silent warning that she understood. She blushed a magnificent shade, but I could not look this time. I was not worried about my blood lust, but the delightful coloring of her face instigated more than my venom. She'd acted without thinking and was now bashful. That reminded me how simmeringly desperate she was becoming and that her fervor matched my own; that knowledge increased my desire for her. But, I held back.

Slowly, and with a deep breath, I continued to kiss her breast again, greedily repeating my same actions to absorb her taste and sounds of pleasure. The feeling of her was fantastic. I assessed my level of control and quickly decided it was safe to touch her and kiss her lower. I moved downward, littering her body with a trail of safe kisses. And then Bella whimpered and I stopped. That sound could be my undoing, but I focused quickly and banished it from my mind, desiring now to continue with touching and tasting her skin since I could.

I pulled away slightly, moving downward again, towards her soft, flat abdomen. She felt my shift in weight as I moved towards the creamy expanse of this new fragrantly pure skin. Her body was beautiful; a picture of perfect femininity. I marveled at the way her hips rose to meet the edges of her frame, while her tiny waist curved inwards. I ran my hand along her side and let it glide across to the small button of her waist. I'd seen it before in rare glimpses, but never touched it. I ran my fingertip along the edges, again completely in awe of this curious part of her. I marveled at the way the skin folded into itself repeatedly.

I was firmly in control. Resigned again to taking her in slowly, I kissed a line from one side of her abdomen to the other and then stopped as a new fascination commanded my attention. I watched in awe as I noticed that her abdomen pulsed with her heart too, even more so despite the distance. Her soft silky skin bounced with each movement. Was there anything her heart didn't move? She was magnificent; radiating and thudding with life. How had I never noticed this before? Delighted, I let out a soft sigh, marveled and stunned by her subtle, automatic beauty.

My hands moved of their own volition to palm her flat belly as the soft pulsing shook my hand infinitesimally. The beat of her heart resonated more strongly through my hand. She did not understand my movements though and she was becoming impatient. She exhaled strongly and her breath sent her scent whirling around me, and yet I was so preoccupied by the beauty of her figure, which stirred in me that strong longing...

I struggled to focus on anything else. And then it emerged; the urge to take her by the waist and draw her to me, allowing myself to enter her slowly to hear her moan. I shut my eyes tightly, drawing my focus away from the sight of my fingers on her skin. I wanted to take her then, right then; I wanted inside of her. I wanted her to moan for me.

"Please...Edward, *please*..." she whispered from her place of confused torture.

It was a plea from her that broke me from my fascination. A plea I ashamedly enjoyed and simultaneously feared. That plea ignited my desire again, overwhelming me, sending a rush of sexual arousal through me. But, I was still in control and knew that I must maintain it. I'd traversed an impossible mountainside, but I would not jump head first off the peak. I resumed kissing and touching her slowly as I fought back vivid images of her writhing in ecstasy, which only served to heighten my pull to please her. I turned my face then and looked at her eyes. They were barely open, she was watching my hand and mouth. I could feel her heat and moisture. Her need for me. Oh, I wanted her. I wanted her so badly. And in that instant, I listened to her heart speed as I peered into her eyes and understood with absolute clarity what I'd never allowed myself to entertain before. She was not just merely infatuated with the idea of this...her body *needed* it in the same way mine needed blood. The way my body needed her now too. Denial of this lust only increased the want. And I couldn't deny her anymore.

Resignation filled me as I moved carefully towards her, propping myself up with my elbow to protect her from my weight. Selfishly, I ran my palm just once more against the length of her body, feeling the skin pulsing and shaking so erratically from the top of her abdomen to the center of her breast, to her collarbone and back to her cheek. The warmth reverberated in waves

through my arm. And I watched her intently, captivated by her heavy eyes. Shockingly, she was still patient.

And I wanted her to know that I wanted her too. That it took every ounce of my restraint to resist her, to keep her safe. I leaned down and kissed her once, more intently and with strength I'd barely allowed before. It was more intense than our first kissing of the night, but I was still in control. That spark of instinct that could force me to react and destroy everything felt steadily resigned for now in the face of my resolve. She kissed me back knowingly, threading her hands in my hair passionately. Without another word, I slowly positioned myself further, fully hovering over her, listening carefully as her heart as it hammered. Her breathing was labored and it consistently funneled itself out so that her scent was now filling my senses steadily. But, I was still in control. And she was still waiting...

And now I was empowered by that realization and did not want to linger too long in a place of indecision, just in case the impulses could return. As if it were possible for my control to wane. I needed to act. I took another deep breath and pulled from her lips.

"I love you..." I whispered against her mouth, hearing my own strained voice in my ears. She sighed in mutual acknowledgement.

I pulled my arm down from cradling her cheek, across our bodies and placed it carefully behind her knee. I lifted her leg aside effortlessly and she immediately adjusted to my hold, wrapping both of her arms tightly around my neck. The curve of her hip rested on my abdomen and my arousal brushed against her opening. I could feel the intense heat of her instantly, sending flutters of tingling pleasure through my legs and torso. I could only imagine how that would intensify...

She pulled me towards her, wrapping her arms around my neck harder and instinctively, the product of nervousness and years of self-restraint, I reached out to touch her face only. She kissed me with ferocity then, losing her patience with my arousal so close, ready, willing, and totally involved in the anticipation. Her new tension only heightened my need to push in and fill her completely, to claim her as mine, to feel the sinful pleasure. I took in a deep breath and held her gaze as I prepared to enter her for the first time and shook my head as if to simultaneously rid myself of my passion, which was still bubbling under the surface; undisciplined and unrestrained.

I refocused, taking a careful, split-second inventory of every aspect of my position, assessing, analyzing the pressure, the intensity I was placing on her body. And then, so slowly, I allowed myself to barely enter her slick heat, filling her just partially.

In no possible way was I prepared for the sensations generated by this sensational intimacy. I gently pushed the very tip of my arousal into her once more, opening her warm skin further and immediately felt the radiating warmth and wetness. Her heat flooded me, sending a sensation of tingling euphoria through my entire being, clouding my head with pleasure. I gasped as I felt every centimeter of her warmth around me. She whimpered in anticipation as her mind registered her own pleasure and I closed my eyes at the sound. Instantly, I searched her eyes for any sign of distress; she was fine, still waiting.

I watched her face, which held nothing but lust and need. She moved her hand and placed it on my chest as if to brace herself, opening her eyes as far as she could with her heavy lids, willing me to continue. I knew what was to come now and I was torn between so many calls for action. But, my desire to stop was overruled by the burning in her eyes and the now fierce impulse take her as mine immediately. And it was too late for such anything but forward movement.

I leaned in an agonized whisper against her ear, "I am so sorry, my love."

I closed my eyes, willing my restraint to hold. I pushed into her again and then once more until I entered her just at the barrier, feeling a more intensified pleasure of her for the first time. I gasped again as the warmth invaded my cold body, emanating in waves of tortuously unfathomable pleasure. I could only think of the realization that the tune of her blood paled in comparison the beautiful song of her body, calling for me, begging and pleading for me to take her again.

The pleasure resounded in aftershocks of sensation. I forced my right hand into a fist, grabbing with it a handful of the sheets, steadying my resolve as I gently pulled my arousal out again, relinquishing every ground of territory that I had fought so hard to gain. I shuddered from pleasure as the warm tingling moved into another fiery trail from my arousal, down my legs and through my torso, forcing another shallow gasp from my chest.

I felt the uncontrollable urge to enter her again. My brain was throwing images, constant desires towards me, willing me to proceed further, with more haste than I would allow. And I desired her too much, I wanted her too much. Thoughts cascaded through my mind in less than a second to her, but she was still anxious. Time was doubling in perception and to her, I still appeared indecisive and delayed.

And yet, I reminded myself that I was still in control. No blood lust, no impulses. *Partial success...*

But, there was no time for revelry. I knew what had to be done still. I braced myself for the pleasure, after feeling its affects previously, I was slightly more prepared. I withdrew and completed the final step then, entering her wholly for the very first time. And Bella gasped as the tissue of her innocence gave way. Her face slipped into a slight grimace of pain and my mind reeled as I assessed her condition. The sensation of her body was breathtakingly pleasurable and I felt incredibly disgusted with myself for focusing on the enjoyment while she was clearly suffering. One tear fell from her clenched eyes and I did not move again, denying myself any further ecstasy both to maintain control and to wait for her to recover.

"I'm okay," she whispered as she ran her fingers through my hair and finally opened her eyes, clearing both the moisture and the discomfort.

"Are you sure?" I asked her, wishing again that I could know the secrets of her mind, to assess if she was truthful.

“Yes, please don’t stop,” she said sincerely. That gave me permission. Permission I both wanted and feared.

I closed my eyes tightly, fighting back the urge to focus my mind on the intense throbbing her body was now pushing through the most sensitive places of me, the sound of her beating heart demanding again that I resign to its quick tempo and immediate call. I pulled out of her skin and entered her once more as instinct demanded, absorbing the waves of pleasure the reverberation of her pulse sent through me. Her subsequent low whimper boggled my mind and I heard the quiet breath escape my own lips as I entered her yet again. She felt too warm, too wet, too compact...

But, I developed a slow rhythm, several seconds off the mark of her demanding heart, which was only speeding up in its dedication to her life. I continued to feel and absorb and enjoy the warmth and pleasurable sensations of her, barely maintaining my own faculties. But still, I searched her face constantly, looking for signs of distress. I found nothing and as I continued, her once lidded eyes remained shut and her luscious lips parted, taunting me, begging to be kissed and sucked. But that would be too much. I focused instead on the pleasure and heat and trained my senses on her heady scent, which effectively rendered the call of her blood irrelevant.

The primal need to increase my pace began to dictate my tempo, but I still resisted moving with the speed of her heart. It consumed me and my resistance to its steady rhythm made me feel even more in control. I went at my own pace, our pace, for her. I continued with my eyes trained on her face still, watching for anything to indicate that she wasn’t enjoying herself and still found nothing.

But then, as if to undo all of what I’d managed to hold on to, Bella began to whimper consistently with my forward movements, but in small, almost kittenish sounds, pleading with me in her own way to give her more of what I was desperately refraining to give.

Suddenly, she whispered...“Edward, please...”

I tried to focus on anything other than the sound of my name on her lips, the pull of her legs as they lay against the side of mine. I could feel her then more. And my arousal was on fire with the heat and the tension of the confines of her body. The pressure on each and every tender nerve was both delightful and agonizing as I continued with our steady pace of entering and withdrawing, absorbing the pleasure and managing to refrain from feeling or experiencing any impulses for her.

And I could give her more. I was still firmly in control. So, I focused on pushing away the desire to enter into her relentlessly, to satiate her hunger, to force her through my actions to moan my name again. Instead, I simply focused on going slightly faster. With careful intention, I pushed into her repeatedly, absorbing the shock of pleasure that stunned me each time. She let out a gasp as I filled her and touched the end of her body, which sent a shiver through her, only increasing the feeling of her warmth.

I withdrew again and pushed slightly harder with my new speed. She gasped and whimpered

again. I closed my eyes, focusing on anything but her sounds. It was painful to pull my eyes away from her face, but I felt stronger in doing so. I could deny myself the pleasure of seeing her parted lips and eyes clenched in pleasure, feeling her was already so intense.

And then so quickly for a human, she moved her legs from their position at my hip and wrapped them behind my knees, pushing her hips closer to mine. The sudden change was too much. The sensations were more absolute and more defined and I began to move without thinking. Her movement freed my hand from its position on her knee and I suddenly wanted my hands on her. I grasped her left hip with my hand and wrapped my fingers around her right arm, reveling in my control and the way her soft skin gave under my touch. She whimpered in approval as I felt her in longer strides. I wanted to hold her steady for me so that I could feel her even deeper...

And then my body whispered to give her more, reminding me that she was okay and I could move harder for her, a little deeper. It would be pleasurable for us both...

I just needed to manufacture and encourage a carefully restrained faster rhythm. So, I stopped denying it; after all, of the instincts that were each vying for control, this was the least harmful to her...

I caught my rhythm then and felt a mind-boggling wave of pleasure with each new movement. And, much to my satisfaction, Bella was transported by this ecstasy I gave her, sighing and whimpering each time I filled her completely. The delightful feel of her warm hands grasping my skin, pleading for more, only made the pleasure more complete.

And then my eyes were taking in every detail of her greedily as I moved with deeper thrusts, sending her whimpers into a higher chord. I was fascinated by the way her back arched slightly off the bed as I gained speed and depth, consistently pushing carefully harder. The view of her delicate body responding involuntarily to my movements, to my actions... was immensely satisfying. I was finally giving her what she'd wanted most. And yet, something was gnawing at my will, desperately begging for consideration. Something impulsive and strong. Something frightening...

I slowed immediately in caution at the faintest indication of the possible re-emergence of my impulses and she whimpered a little, feeling the simpler, less immediate rhythm. But, I shook my head slightly and slowed more as I struggled to push away the urges her sounds and her visual stimulation encouraged. She moaned again and then once more; only now it was a different sound. She wanted me to resume my previous pace and depth. Her eyes fluttered open for the first time, lidded and dark and her full lips met once before she whispered.

“Edward, please go faster,” she begged.

And I could not resist that. I could withhold from the demands of her heart, but not her words with my name tumbling from her lips with such pleasurable requests attached. I wanted what she was asking for, so I sped up just slightly again. Cautiously. And still I watched her. Her breasts began to move in their own way and her legs wrapped tighter around me, pulling my hips to hers, lengthening my penetration of her wet skin. Suddenly, I felt the simultaneous urge to both cup

her breasts to feel her shaking skin with each movement and to clutch her hips, bringing that soft skin into my hands and under my control...I reached out...

And stopped.

I knew then that I could not look at her anymore. I pinpointed immediately that it was the visual stimulation that triggered my impulsive urges. My dangerous wants. The way her body responded to me was too wonderful and too tempting. I searched instantly for a focus point, anything but her feminine curve of her waist, the rise of her breasts and the flare of her hips as our bodies joined. I scanned the room, settling my eyes on the colorful flower petals carefully stitched on the pillowcase directly next to her head.

Salvation. I focused on that pillow and proceeded again, slightly faster. Feeling her tense again as whimpers continued to fall from her lips.

And now it was getting easier. As long as we stayed this way, I could maintain control and absorb each shock of her pleasure carefully. As long as I was not looking at her, watching her, I could do this. It was not total deprivation, after all. A minimal sacrifice. I could at least hear her breathing, her whimpers and her quick heartbeat as each erratically charged from her little body. That was better than nothing. So, I focused on the flower. And as I became slightly consumed by the sensations generated from her arousal and her warmth, I told myself that the flower was becoming more beautiful, more intricate, and more interesting. More worthy of my unrelenting focus.

This worked well until Bella's whimpers began to transform into moans. Because our bodies were connected, I could feel the reverberations as they began to form in her chest only to escape milliseconds later, intensifying their affect. And they were quiet moans at first, but each sound closed my eyes and I began exercising as much discipline as possible to remove the echo of the sounds of her pleasure from my mind. I repeatedly forced my eyes open and away from her, tracing the lines of the green stitching again until it met the beautifully crafted blue petal of the flower, focusing only partially on the unfathomable pleasure of her.

And I concentrated with unrelenting focus, but the friction and the sounds of her began to chisel away at my careful dominance as they increased in sensation and sound. And she began to moan in fuller, louder sounds, sending flutters of satisfaction through me. Chipping away. And they were echoing. Repeatedly, overlapping one another. Soon, as her sounds increased to a relentless pitch, it became too much and the impulses swarmed. The pulsing beat of her abdomen, the slick wetness of her tight sex, the sounds falling from her lips, the heat of her body, the futile claws of her nails digging into my skin, expressing her pleasure, and the heady scent of her satisfaction were all too much. It was all too powerful and the impulses gained in intensity, generating images and visions of me, taking her with no restraint in various places and situations. Pinning her against the headboard, leaning her over the bed. I wanted to show her what I could do, what I wanted to do, what I needed to do to pleasure her...

It was becoming more difficult to maintain composure then as the images filled my mind, instigating sparks of need and desire. I shook my head, ridding the visions, desperate for

continued control, anxious to feel the pleasure I could feel building within me, and disgustingly desirous to hear her continued cries for me. The cries of satisfaction and the need for release.

I still focused on the flower, but each time she moaned, gasped, or breathed her scent hit my face and a knot of desire placed itself firmly in my stomach, sending waves of elation through my body. I shuddered from the pleasure and drew in a shallow breath, bracing, and willing myself to control the sensations. With unflinchingly consistent movements, I continued to force myself into her, this time marveling at the pillow, which gave me my focused control. My need was strong, but I felt stronger. *I can do this, I will do this, for her.* I began to trace the stem of the flower.

“Oh my God, Edward.....” she moaned. “I...oh...”

Her short, incomplete, intermittent gasps of pleasure sent turbulent emotions through me yet again. I wanted to show her that this was not all I was capable of, I wanted her to feel me solidifying our love, our complete unity. Her head was tossed back in absolute ecstasy and although my eyes never left the delicate flower, I could see her from the corner of my eyes. And I felt a rush of power. I made her feel this way. *Mine.*

And then, she arched her hips into mine, changing and increasing the pleasure for us both. And I pushed into her body again quickly with this new exquisite sensation she'd arranged. The feeling was so incredibly pleasurable and I wanted to concentrate on the feeling of her, but I was fearful of losing control. The urge to rock into her hips harder was instinctual. And I needed more, I wanted more. In a fit of impulse, I threw my head back automatically and wrapped my hands around her hips to secure them against me, harder, deeper. She loved it, I loved it, and I could not stop...

“Edward, yes...faster, please...” she cried.

With her words and the cry of my name brought chaos. Her heart, her blood, her body, my arousal, her moans, her legs wrapped around my hips, it was too fast, too strong, too much, too much. I almost lost control. I almost lost it all. My head and my resolve spun and my urges battled inside of me. In one instance, I wanted to grab her and firmly place her body on my hips even further to intensify my access into every part of her and in the next, I wanted to suck on her breasts and make her scream my name. But, I couldn't and that reminder infuriated my wants.

Ecstasy swirled in tight circles inside my mind, fear overruled it, and animalistic impulse surged. I felt paralyzed, mortified and I very nearly bent to my animalistic will like a slave to its master. But, in a flash of control, I fought against the impulses, knowing that she would be injured for my needs. But, I had to expel the impulses to take her more which I could feel building, demanding a release of some sort. I had no idea how to mitigate their strength, but in a flash of inspiration, as she cried out again and sent her sounds and scents swarming around me, instigating me further, I realized my will had nearly broken.

Feeling that intense disappointment woke me from my place of sickening pleasure. She was oblivious to my pain, completely absorbed with the feelings her feeble human body were

enduring that she could not see any part of my agony. I felt isolated, tortured. I was terrified suddenly at how far I'd gone without realizing it. I knew then that my urges had to find solace somehow. My eyes opened and flashed to the pillow.

Instinctively, I expelled my impulsive needs into the colorful threads. I thrashed and bit and focused on the finite splits of material and feather as the contents and filling came down around us in a whirlwind of expulsion.

I continued to feel her, but I no longer focused on the warm sensations as a second round of impulses surged, assaulting my will and my mind with visions of her pinned beneath me, reaching her satisfaction in my arms as I ravaged her body with my desire. I shook my head and grasped the second pillow, feeling both elated for my discovering such a method and empowered by my ability to divert the urges. I grasped, thrashed and ripped as I continued my pace, sending plumes gliding into the air as I focused again on the look, feel and sound of the material separating. The impulses diminished immediately.

It was as if the urges, which had manifested themselves in energetic, violent spurts had just needed release.

And then it was over. The impulses seemed to hover in the background of my thoughts, but they did not push themselves forward again. Instantly, I could concentrate again, as if I'd rid my mind and body of the nuisance. I felt lighter all of the sudden, sharper, more able to focus.

I focused back on Bella, completely unobservant and writhing with pleasure. I heard her cries again and her heartbeat, but they did not trigger the same wild passions, only deep need to make her feel what she'd always wanted to feel with me. My love for her, my need, my desire became suddenly fuller with a depth I'd not felt yet. As if, once the erratic need had been funneled away, I could feel the real emotions I'd longed to experience, especially now as we joined our bodies and unified our love.

I whipped my head up, exulted. The urges were mitigated and Bella was unharmed. Unrestrained exhilaration ran through me and I reveled in it. I laughed wildly and Bella's eyes fluttered open at the sound, only to close again as she arched her back away from the bed, bringing her body closer to mine. Her face, contorted in ecstasy, was tilted upward, her neck extended while her head pressed deeply into the pillow, her hand was knotted in her own hair, her breasts prominent, nearly inches from my chest. How long had I ignored her? I felt remorseful for missing these moments, absorbed in my own struggle. Again, I was then able to assess all of the careful details of her beautiful body; the glistening of her dewy skin, the thumping vibrations in her skin generated by her racing heart, her erotic moans and whimpers...

She was a picture of exquisite sensuality. Her hair was fanned out beneath her, contrasting so wonderfully against the white sheets. And she was covered in feathers, a testament to my ability to control myself for her, which only inspired me to feel her more and show her what I could do now. Now that I was safe. *Safe...*

The exhilaration of the knowledge that I could please her safely forced me to push deeper,

willing her to reach satisfaction. My eyes were wild with want for her to find what she'd wanted all along. Should I tell her, coax her? I didn't trust myself to speak. Entranced, I watched her closely as her gasps began to transform into beautiful cries each time I would thrust into her body. I saw her through clear eyes now and she mesmerized me again.

And then suddenly she was trembling at her core. I altered my thrusting to accommodate her need, pushing deeper and harder again. Safely. I watched her responses to my movements and the control was unbelievable. I would adjust, and in response, her mouth would open wide, her eyes shutting tighter at the feeling.

"...Ed-ward...I think..." She was incoherent, but I understood.

My head was stirring with reverberating sounds of her moaning...*Ed-ward*...

Suddenly, her little body began to shudder. I watched her eyelids flutter as she reached her satisfaction. She was crying out, fisting her hands into her hair and digging her fingers into my stone skin and I focused only on her now with a clarity that allowed me to absorb every sound and sight. Her orgasm sent a flood of feeling into my body, my mind. She was releasing years of pent up frustration, letting go of her want. And I felt so many things at once: joy, relief, elation, satisfaction. She cried my name repeatedly and the affect of her words pushed me to the edge. I wanted to feel the release that was pining its way out of my body, a release only Bella could provide.

And then, it was with me in an instance and I could not fight it. This one urge, this one instinct, this one experience I felt to its fullest potential.

My satisfaction came in a rush of convoluted sensations, sending my body into a nearly incapacitated state. I grabbed her hips and her waist with each hand, grasping and pulling her towards me, deepening my penetration of her, desperately trying to satisfy the aching rush for release. She thrashed against me, pulling my hair and scraping her nails painlessly on my back, but her cries of pleasure reassured me that she was enjoying my controlled intensity. And then, one part of my mind prepared for release, while the other reassessed my hold on her and immediately readjusted. It was too tight, but she'd seemed not to notice...

I was unable to think of anything singular in the next moment as I shuddered in the wake of my own release. It was pleasurable beyond anything I'd ever experienced. Words, emotions, nothing could summarize the complex, combined sensations. And when it was over, I continued to move against her slightly as I struggled to maintain my control of my strength.

And then as she exhaled a final moan of satisfied need, I did not want to move as I lay slightly against her body. She wrapped her arms around my neck and tangled her hands into my hair, pressing my head against her chest tightly. Carefully, I lowered myself slightly onto her, feeling her heat radiate and envelope me completely. And feeling the satisfaction of both my own release and the knowledge that I could be with her as I'd always wanted. As husband and wife.

She sighed in a rough voice, moving her little warm hands to wrap them around my neck. I

closed my eyes and relaxed a little against her, nestling my head into her hair, taking in her luxurious scent freely, resting my cheek against hers to absorb her warmth. I was taunting the monster within me, the demon of impulse, relishing in their mutual defeat. Her little hand touched the back of my head and I felt her take a long, deep breath, swirling her scent around me again. She was helping me gloat and I grinned. Her whisper was so very hoarse.

“I love you,” she whispered with her clear, dark eyes matching her words in an expression of satisfaction and affection. For me. I spoke against her lips, nudging her nose with mine.

“I love you too, Bella,” I whispered. “That’s why we’re here.”

She grinned at me lazily and I grinned back, kissing her once more, feeling the sense of accomplishment that could only come with succeeding in a task that had once seemed impossible. I shifted our weight so that I was on my back, pulling her close to me, but unconnected now. She snuggled against my chest, nudging her head in between the crevices of my neck and shoulder and fell asleep quickly.

From the moment she laid her head down, the severity of my feelings warred inside of me. I could not pinpoint them all, but combined, they created a full feeling of relieved satisfaction. I’d done it for her. I’d given her what she’d wanted, fulfilled my bargain, kept her safe and unharmed, and joined us together as one.

The pleasure, the joy, the satisfaction filled me with a sense of elation I’d yet to experience, perhaps save the emotion I’d felt as I saw her walking towards me down that aisle, so radiant and so beautiful. And yet, this was more complete because of the intensity of her attachment to this action. I looked down at her angelic face, her hair dotted with white plumes, a testament to my success. I cleared the strands of her long hair from her face and bent to kiss her soft lips once. She sighed in her sleep and I smiled as I held her closer, feeling grateful once again for the warmer climate.

Ah. And this elation, this joy, this peaceful satisfaction stayed with me while she slept so long and deep. So steady was her heart and her breathing that I’d smiled to myself the entire night, remembering my bartering with the Moon. How silly now. I was stronger than I’d thought, even though I had destroyed Esme’s pillows. I chuckled to myself, thinking of how I would explain that one to Esme. And then I frowned as I realized that I probably wouldn’t have to. Alice would surely tell everyone in a gleeful exclamation of the casualty of the unused pillows.

And this wonderful peace continued to last with me as I watched the magnificent orange sunrise from the window behind our bed. And then, in the early morning, I pulled Bella back to me, snuggling her into my side. Her arm was rested underneath the soft sheets but when I pulled it free, selfishly wrapping it around my chest to hold her closer, I noticed what I’d failed to see before.

All along Bella’s beautiful, soft arm were the marks of trauma. Bruises traced along her skin, purpling deeper with each passing moment. I startled and stared in instant mortification as I traced the swollen, purple indentations against the range of my fingertips. I shook my head in

terror as I processed what I'd done. I searched my images, memories and recollections as they flooded back in a stir of remembrance. With exact concentration, I saw then. Twice, I'd handled her too roughly with careless maneuvering. And more times than that, I'd held on to her with disgusting enthusiasm. But, it was the image of my hands and my fingertips, grasping her wildly while I found my selfish release that left me despondent with guilt.

While I had struggled to feel ecstasy, Bella had been hurt by me. And she'd been too good to say a word. Although she'd writhed against me in what had seemed like pleasure, the realization that I'd been so lost and consumed in my own world of unrestrained desire that I'd probably been unable to know the difference at the time, ate through any peace I'd felt earlier. Would I have been able to identify the difference? I reviewed the image once more with genuine disgust. Clearly, I had been wild with lust and wouldn't have discerned pleasure from pain.

I shuddered in horror again. What would Bella expect from me now? What would she think of me? Had she been so transported by pleasure that she'd not felt the pain? What about tomorrow? I reviewed the images of her again, but stopped. Focusing on her was only encouraging a disgusting, newly resurrected desire for her. As if I'd not satisfied myself with her enough. Abusively. I had clearly just hurt her. There was no end to my selfishness. I pushed away my vile need as the realizations continued to flood.

Bella was damaged and Bella had been hurt. Bella had been injured. By me.