



Part One:

I couldn't believe I agreed to go to the fair. It was probably forty degrees outside, and my layers of clothing didn't seem like enough. But it was perhaps the better choice. Alice made me pick between dressing up and going to a Halloween party or the carnival. Knowing her, the costume she would have bought for me would have been far too over the top to be seen out in public. I tried to argue against it too because of the price of the tickets, but of course, she won.

"Don't worry about that," she stated dismissively over the phone.

"I'm not a Cullen. I don't have millions of dollars to blow on nothing, thank you very much," I sarcastically replied. If we were together, she would have slapped the back of my head. It wouldn't be the first or the last time. I probably deserved it because of my sass.

"My dad gets tons of those 'all-you-can-ride' passes for free from the hospital. They sponsor some kiddie health thing. See?" She said triumphantly. "It doesn't cost me a dime for you to come along. Come on! It'll be awesome! We can hang out at the fair after school and eat greasy food. And then you can spend the night."

"I don't know... Who else is going?"

She barely let me finish. "Just the gang. Please, please, please?" I could practically see her pouting. Sighing, I knew she had me.

“Fine,” I mumbled sourly. I hated the cold. And wet. And it was both.

“Awesome! Why don’t you come over around four?” I could tell by her tone she was hopping up and down. I wondered how many cups of coffee she had that day already. Too many, probably. She was the most caffeinated person I knew.

So, there I was, standing at the front door- in the chilly wind and the rain. It was surprising my best friend wasn’t waiting for me outside, but I was fifteen minutes early. I brought a backpack full of stuff, wrapping in as many layers as I could. I felt like a snow beast in all the fluff, and I knew the cold wouldn’t bother them at all. Phoenix made me soft.

Knocking on the door rhythmically, I rocked back and forth on my heels while I waited for someone to answer. I could see Rose’s car out front, so I could tell the twins had already arrived. Jasper and Rosalie were also southern born, but they had been in Washington State a lot longer than I had. I was the newest to the group, just moving there the year before. Alice took me under her well-dressed wing towards the end of the school year, and we had been friends ever since.

When the door opened, I almost choked on my own spit. Standing before me was one of the most beautiful people I had ever seen. It was a face I knew all too well. It was Edward, Alice’s older brother. I sat next to him in advanced biology the year before, and I had a massive crush on him. I don’t think he had even noticed me, though. The last time I saw him, it was the beginning of the summer before he went to work at a camp.

“Hello?” He said after a moment. I must have been gaping like an idiot.

I cleared my throat and spoke slowly. “Is Alice here?”

“Oh, yeah. She’s still in her cave, getting ready. Come on in,” he answered with a smirk. I couldn’t help but snicker. How accurate were those words? I had been a victim of her fashion torture dungeon one too many times already.

“Thanks,” I mumbled as I rushed past him. I set my stuff on the floor by the door to put in her room later. If I went inside, she would somehow redress or restyle me.

Walking towards the living room, I found Jasper, Emmett, and Rose sitting around the television. She was flipping through a fashion magazine, and the boys were playing a video game. I plopped down on the loveseat.

“Hey, Bells,” Em muttered, not even looking up from the screen.

“Hey... Who’s winning?”

"I am!" Jasper thundered, bashing into his friend's shoulder. Cursing loudly, Emmett started mashing buttons.

I laughed at their silly display. "I've got the winner."

Coming into the room after a moment, Edward sat at the far end of the couch, which was closest to me. He gazed at me for a long minute, as if he was trying to remember something on the tip of his tongue. Finally, he brought out his hand for me to shake. "Um, I'm Edward, by the way. Alice's brother."

"She knows who you are, you unobservant dumbass. You sat next to Bella in AB last year," Emmett, his youngest sibling, stated in a biting tone, continuing to smash buttons. He was in it too. Apparently, something went wrong because he threw his controller down. "Dammit!"

"Oh..." He murmured distantly. His cheeks flushed a bright red, and I felt bad for him. It sucked that he didn't know me, but honestly, who would? I wasn't much to look at. There was nothing about me that was memorable. We never even spoke.

"Come on, Bells. It's you and me." Jasper began in a thick southern drawl.

"You're just going to have to play later. I'm ready," Alice announced as she bounced into the room.

"Well, now that the princess is prepared, we can go," Edward grumbled as he rolled his eyes and stood.

His sister, in the most ladylike way possible, flipped him off. Her nails were painted perfectly to match her outfit. "Come on. Let's head out."

Before we could walk outside, I pulled her back. "You didn't tell me he was going to be here."

"I didn't? It must have slipped my mind. It's a good thing, though. Now no one is the odd man out!" She smiled brightly, then walked out onto the front porch. She knew how I felt about him. I seriously considered banging my head against the door.

"I don't think everyone is going to fit in the jeep," Edward pointed out the obvious. I couldn't help but stare at him. I felt like a silly, overly infatuated teenager. Well, I was, but I normally wasn't like- this. He was just so breathtaking in his leather jacket and gloves, with his coppery hair hanging in front of his beautiful green eyes. The red freckles that dashed over his sharp nose made me melt. I didn't realize I was staring so hard, but apparently, he did. Glancing down, he smiled a little.

“Let’s take two cars then- Rose, Jasper, Em, and me in the truck. And you and Bella can ride in yours. What do you think?” Alice pondered aloud. Her tone was too bright. I wanted to turn around and kick her in the backside, hard.

“Sounds good to me,” he agreed right away, shrugging his muscular shoulders. His years on the baseball team had been good to him. My eyes grew wide with horror.

“I’m going to kill you,” I grunted in her ear before I marched over to the waiting silver Volvo. Her brother, like the impeccable gentlemen they raised him to be, opened the door. “Thanks.”

“My pleasure,” he assured me with his trademark crooked smile making an appearance.

After he closed it, I let out a ragged breath. It was going to be a very long night. I didn’t know how I was going to handle it. I was clumsy when I wasn’t nervous. But when something had me all wound up? I was just plain screwed.

“Do you mind if I put on some music?” He asked after he climbed inside.

Just looking at him made me blush. “No, not at all. Go ahead.”

Oh, yeah. It was going to be a very long evening.

He flicked on the radio. Apparently, something was already playing, because it started in the middle of a song. Instantly, I knew it. I couldn’t help but laugh. It really didn’t fit him. At all.

“What?” He questioned, peeking at me from the corner of his eye.

“Bowling For Soup?”

His face lit up. “Oh! So, you know who they are? They’ve been around a while. I saw them perform on campus earlier this year. Their songs are pretty amusing,” he explained with a smile. It was oddly formal.

I giggled. “Yeah. They are funny.” One of my favorite parts came on, and I couldn’t help but sing along. “She’s seen all the classics. She knows every line. Breakfast Club, Pretty in Pink, even St. Elmo’s Fire!” It just slipped out before I could stop myself. I even danced in my seat. When I realized what I did, I put my hands over my face. “Ugh, I can’t believe I did that.”

He laughed softly. “Don’t worry. It was cute.” I dropped them to look at him, my eyes wide and a sizzling blush covering my cheeks. By then, we were at the fairgrounds. Thankfully,

it was only a brief trip on the interstate from their home. He came to a stop and turned to peer at me. "Don't be embarrassed. It really was adorable."

"Um, thanks?" I questioned more than said because I didn't know what else to say. I felt like such a dork.

When I stepped out of the car, I joined the group led by Alice. She was handing out the passes. "So, what are we going on first?"

That was how my night started. Every ride seemed to need a partner. And since I wasn't coupled up like the rest of them, I had to go with Edward. The first one we went on, I was practically sitting on his lap. I scooted to the far end of the seat, trying to give him as much space as possible.

"What's wrong?" He inquired as he ducked his chin.

"Nothing." I looked down at my hands, which were tightly clutching the silver bar.

"Are you scared?" I shook my head, unable to meet his always intense gaze. Swallowing hard, I gnawed on my bottom lip. "I promise I don't bite," he whispered in my ear.

I twisted to look at him. His face was only a couple of inches away from mine. He winked playfully, and I opened my mouth to respond, unsure what to say. Luckily, the ride started and saved me from myself.

As we rode more, I got more comfortable with him. He seemed to be directing most of his attention at me. Perhaps it was because he didn't have much choice. One of the biggest problems with being a single person in a group full of couples was that they tended to be... attached... to one another while they were together. And, apparently, all the excitement made them in the mood to make out every chance they got.

Rose was practically wrapped around Emmett like he was a stripper pole while we waited in line for the small roller coaster. If she shoved her tongue any further down his throat, he would accidentally swallow it. His hands were glued to her ass.

"They look like they're having fun," Edward declared dryly, rolling his eyes as he shook his head.

"Too much if you ask me," I whispered back.

"So, they're making you uncomfortable too?" He sheepishly questioned. I could tell he was a real private kind of guy, and this type of PDA was probably too much for him. It was something we had in common. Nodding, I looked over my shoulder at him. I hadn't realized he

was so close. I had to keep myself from jumping. “Do you want to get something to eat after this one, then? Let them have their tonsil-hockey time.”

I giggled. “Yeah, sure. I’m getting hungry.”

“You’re hungry?” Alice slurred as she pulled away from Jasper, who had a very... happy... look on his face. “Me too. Why don’t we all get something after this?”

Almost inaudibly, Edward groaned for some reason. He was probably just sick of all the couples, too. I barely heard it.

“Want to share a funnel cake with me for dessert?” He asked after we sat down with our food. I got a huge corn dog with ketchup and mustard, and he had a slice of pizza. “I can’t eat all of it by myself.”

“Sure. That sounds good. I can never finish them either,” I smiled. He laughed a little. “What?”

Grabbing a napkin, he wiped the corner of my mouth. There was a massive glob of red goo on my cheek. I blushed furiously. Looking away, I pushed my lips together in embarrassment.

“Hey, Bella, do I have anything on my face?” He spoke in an overly cheerful voice. It was like his sister’s.

When I turned to look at him, his entire upper lip was covered in sauce. Laughing, I knew he was only trying to make me feel better. It worked, too. It was a very sweet gesture. As he had done for me, I leaned forward and cleaned his face with a napkin. “You’re too much, you know that?”

He impishly winked at me again as he grinned. He really was just like his sister. “I’m going to get that funnel cake. Want anything special on it?”

“Just powder sugar.”

“Perfect. Just how I like it,” he replied, turning on his heels to fetch it.

Alice slid closer to me, resting her head on my shoulder. “Having a good time?”

“Yes,” I hissed through clenched teeth. I was still mad at her for not at least warning me first. Though, if she had, I probably would have turned down the night completely. And she knew it.

She bumped her arm into mine. "You're going to have to tell me about it later."

"About what?"

She winked, then scooted back to her man. I wondered what was with the Cullens and winking. They always seemed to know something I didn't.

Edward took her spot, sitting on the same side instead of across from me. "You have to try this. It's perfect," he moaned as he tore a piece off for me. He held it close to my lips, looking at me expectantly.

Bending forward, I took it from his fingertips. It was a mix of sweet with the salty taste of his fingers, which were now bare because he pulled his gloves off to eat. I hummed in pleasure, but not at the flavor of the cheap fair food. "This is yummy."

When I peered up, he was biting his bottom lip and blushing a little. He glanced down quickly, clearing his throat. The action reminds me... of myself. He grabbed his soda from across the table and took a large gulp. I wanted to ask what made him nervous so suddenly, but I didn't have the courage to do so.

We sat in silence after that. I didn't really know what to say. We finished the funnel cake and waited for everyone else, which seemed to take forever.

"What do you want to ride now?" Alice prompted the group as she threw her cup away.

"I don't think riding anything would be a good idea," Rose started as she rubbed her flat stomach. "I don't want to get sick on my Gucci. Why don't we play some games or something?"

I really didn't have the money, so I stood back to watch. Edward seemed to linger behind, letting the rest of them have their fun. "Don't like carnival games?"

Shaking my head, I shrugged. "I do. It's just I don't have a lot of cash to waste on this," I admitted with a blush. "I would never win anything, anyway."

He pursed his lips in thought for a moment, then looked around quickly as his eyes searched for something. He apparently found it because he grabbed my arm and tugged me along until we were standing in front of a game, the one where you throw the softball to knock over the three milk jugs. It had enormous prizes hanging around it, showing that it was one of the hardest to win. He pulled out five dollars, the price of one attempt, and handed it to the man. He turned to me with a sly smile. "Pick out which one you like."

"What?" I blurted out in confusion. Before I could get an answer, he wound his arm back and threw the ball with all his strength. The metal containers clattered to the ground loudly.

“We have a winner!” The operator shouted. “What would you like?”

“Whatever the pretty lady wants,” he answered with a big smile as he gazed at me. He was peering at me from underneath his long eyelashes. I felt hypnotized by him. “What do you want, Bella?”

I had to keep myself from squawking ‘you, Edward! I want you!’ But it wasn’t wise, or possible, and I wouldn’t ruin a perfect evening. “How about the purple teddy bear?”

The man pulled it down and handed it to me. Clutching it to my chest, I hugged it tightly. “Why don’t you try to win another?” He offered, always trying to make another sale. “It needs a friend.”

“No, this is enough,” I declared hastily, pulling him away from the game. We had lost track of the others, and I couldn’t see them anywhere.

“Do you like it?” He asked when we were a safe distance from the callers.

I pushed my face into the plush toy. “I love it. Thank you. But you didn’t have to do that.”

“I wanted to. Every girl deserves to have a stuffed animal won for her at the fair,” he flirted, that smile reappearing. I felt my knees go a little weak, and it took everything I had not to drop to the ground. He was so charming, and he wasn’t even trying.

We were gazing at each other, and the silence was deafening. He started to lean in slowly. His lips were only a few inches away from mine. Closing my eyes, I prayed what I hoped was about to happen, was. His mouth was literally a breath away when I felt something short and annoying tug on my arm.

“Come on! We’re going to the haunted house!” Alice declared excitedly. Sometimes, she had the worst timing. I wanted to punch her.

“I don’t like haunted houses,” I complained as she pulled me along.

“Well, I’ll protect you, if you want, Bella,” Edward promised from beside me. His hand touched my lower back, making my heart flutter loudly in my chest. I was surprised he couldn’t hear it.

“Okay...” I trailed off breathlessly.

Who could refuse an offer like that?

