



## Chapter eleven-

I drank too much. We got in so late. I didn't set an alarm, but I woke up around ten in the morning. I didn't expect to see Edward, but he was already awake and was making coffee in the kitchen just like I showed him how to before. If I had known I would have gotten ready before coming out of the room. I looked like death.

He made me a mug and put it in his normal spot by the bar. "I hope it's good."

"Thanks." I took a small sip. "What are we doing today?"

Edward was somehow cheerful. "Well, Sundays I normally take a day off. I lay around the house. Usually. But I don't want to do that today. I think I want to go out for a while. Want to get some brunch?"

"Whatever you want to do. I'm just here for the ride," I told him. I felt tired. And sad. My heart wasn't in it anymore. I was ready to go home.

"Let's get brunch then. We'll take an Uber so we can have mimosas," he said overly perky. I had cotton mouth and felt my age.

"I need to shower first."

"Of course," he smiled at me brightly. "I'll be editing in my office whenever you're ready. No rush, just let me know."

I took a long hot shower, letting it wash away some of my painful hangover. I was at the end of my clean clothes and only had a couple of outfits to choose from for the day. Blue jean shorts and a tee shirt would have to do. I put on my makeup to cover up the circles under my eyes. Thankfully I had a big pair of sunglasses.

I gently knocked on his office door, pushing it open ever so slightly. Eddie was sitting at his computer working on the videos from the day before. I couldn't hear the audio, but on the screen I was talking to him animatedly and he was smiling and laughing in return. I wonder what I had said to him. I couldn't remember.

"Ready when you are," I told him softly.

Edward picked out a restaurant and reserved a table on the way there. He chatted the entire time, way too pleasantly for someone who should have been hungover too. Maybe he was just still drunk. If so, *lucky him*.

He ordered two mimosas as soon as we sat down. "You're off the clock," he said again when they came to the table.

"No, I'm not." I pushed it towards him.

He pushed it back. "Okay, well. Just one then. I know you like champagne."

"One," I agreed because my head hurt. "Can I also have some water?" I asked the waitress when she came to the table. I took some aspirin with it when she brought it to me.

I ordered eggs Benedict with crab and steak with a side of sliced tomatoes and a cup of fruit while he ordered a french toast with bananas fosters on top.



“So, what else do you want to do or did you just want to eat?” I asked, taking a picture of him mid-sip of champagne. He held up his glass and posed with a stupid smile so I could take another picture.

“I think I want to go to the zoo today. It's not too far from here.”

“Oh...” I drew out softly.

“Is that okay?” He suddenly seemed panicked.

I shook my head. “Oh yeah, I'm just surprised.”

“Well, you mentioned it yesterday, and it sounded like fun. I haven't done anything like that in ages. It'll be nice to do something *wholesome*,” he explained. “If you don't want to, it's alright.”

“No, I want to. It sounds great,” I assured him. I wondered if I had enough energy to give him the attention he deserved.

When our food came, his plate was massive with eight thick slices of toast. “How are you going to eat all that?” I laughed. It had to be too much even for him.

He put two pieces on a side plate that had his bacon on it previously and pushed it in my direction. “Like that.”

I wasn't going to turn it down. I gave him a bite of my eggs off my fork. The way his mouth wrapped around the tines and he licked his lips after made me tingly all up my spine. “*Mmm*,” he moaned his approval. I was feeling a little jealous of the fork.

I pushed my lips together tightly and took in a deep breath. It was going to be a long day for me.

The zoo was a little busy since it was a nice Sunday afternoon. He bought our tickets while I took about a hundred pictures just at the entrance. At least I didn't stand out with my camera equipment.

First, we went into the children's zoo where Edward had way too much fun petting goats. Then we made our way past the meerkats and flamingos. We made a slow pace, chatting as we went. It was literally a perfect day outside. Just a little windy to cool the warm, humid air.



“So, what’s your favorite animal?” He asked me. Edward reached over and took my camera from my hands and took a picture of me in front of the greater flamingos. He seemed pleased with the result and took another. He smiled at me from over my camera when I posed a little for him.

“Um,” I drew out as I thought about it with a smile. “Zoo animal? I’d say otters. Or maybe capybara. They’re supposed to be really friendly. Like a hamster. What about you?”

“Oh, hm. I don’t know. Foxes are cute. I liked lions as a kid.” He took a couple of steps back and took another picture. He bit his lip as he looked at the result.

I took my camera back from him. “I half expected you to say kangaroo,” I told him dryly and very sarcastically.

“Kangaroos can get *fucked*,” he said with heated conviction. I was so shocked I laughed too loudly. “No, fuck those mean twats. I got kicked by one as a kid in my backyard.”

The image threw me into giggles. “Oh, no! Poor baby!”

“I’ve got a scar.” He lifted his shirt to show me a three-inch scar on his torso. It was very faint and very low on his hips. I quickly took his picture, and he gasped, pulling his shirt down. “Modesty!”

“I want you to know that I was making an Aussie stereotype joke and you out stereotyped me. Bravo. Got any dingo or koala scars?” I taunted him. “Wanna show me your Drop bear wounds?”

“No,” he said quietly with a little pout. “Dingoes are bloody scary, though.”

Edward was patient with me as we went through the zoo, allowing me to stop for as long as I wanted to take pictures of him or the animals. We spent the entire afternoon there.

I took over a thousand pictures by the time we were done.

“So, what’s next?” I asked him as we waited for a car to come to pick us back up.

“You’ll see.”

He wouldn't say anything else. I couldn't understand why he was being so mysterious about it. We were almost there when I realized.

"Santa Monica pier? Really?"

He shrugged a little bit. "Yeah, I thought we could see the sunset here and get some seafood for dinner."

"You didn't have to do all of this for me," I said quietly, feeling very shy.

"Are you having fun?"

"Are you?" I asked him in return.

"Isn't it obvious?" He asked me.

"I could ask you the same," I replied, smiling at him before feeling self-conscious. I bit my lip and looked at the window. "I can't imagine a better last day than this. Thanks."

"I'm glad you're happy," he said warmly.

We walked along the beach as it slowly became dusk. Music could be heard everywhere, and Eddie playfully danced along and mouthed the words to some of the songs.

I was going to have a million pictures to edit. Mostly of him being foolish. I didn't mind.

He took my camera and bag from me at dinner. "Alright. That's it. No more, Bella. You're done for the day. You're going to relax. Get whatever you want and save room for dessert, okay?"

"Fine," I was too tired to want to argue. We were at a snug little table somewhere in a corner again. We were very close together. Edward ordered us a bottle of wine to share. It was the same as the other night at his house.

"You know, I'm surprised no one recognized you today," I told him when the waiter left our table.

Edward looked a little self-conscious. "Well, I'm mainly a voice actor."

"You have like twenty million followers."

"Spread out around the globe. There are seven billion people on the planet. It's not that many," he tried to be humble about it, but I rolled my eyes. "I'm not a big deal out here."

"Yes, you are. You're just not as big a deal as you're going to be... yet. You're going to be a household name one day. It's pretty obvious," I pointed out to him. "You already have an amazing resume, and it's only getting better every day."

He swallowed a big drink of the yellow liquid in his glass. "God, you do fluff my ego so. I mean, I like it. I don't think that will be true, but it's so sweet that you feel that way."

I shook my head, playing with my own wine glass. I traced my fingers over the rim. "Edward, you are wildly talented. And smart. And you are what? Twenty four? Look at what you've accomplished so far. And you just started with Disney! You've already won a Grammy! And you've not mentioned that once this entire week. I'd tell everyone and their mothers. I'd start conversations with *'hi, I'm the Bella Swan who won a Grammy.'*"

"That was just for reading a book." He shook his head. "It wasn't anything special."

"Well, I listened to it when I realized I was working with you and I understand why it won. I could listen to you speak for hours," I confessed. I took in a deep breath when I realized what had come out of my mouth. God, I must have sounded like a lovesick teen girl. I was so embarrassed.

"You are so lovely," he said sincerely. "I started doing all of this to deal with my anxiousness and to help boost my self-confidence when I was having a really hard time. I never imagined I would be doing this six or eight years later. I didn't realize that my entire life had been leading up to this moment. It's better than I ever imagined though."

"You deserve it. You've worked so hard." I touched his hand. He turned his palm up and squeezed it for a moment.

Our waiter came with our food. I moved my hands to my lap.

Our conversation was much lighter throughout the rest of dinner. I was too tired. We didn't speak at all the entire ride back to his house. It was just after nine. Where had the week gone? I wanted to cry. Why did he have to be so wonderful?

"What time is your flight tomorrow?" He asked quietly, almost solemnly.

"Noon. So, I'll need to leave by ten to get to the airport," I explained to him.

He stopped and considered his words for a long minute before he began to speak. "I realize you probably need to pack and get to sleep but would you like to sit by the pool with me for a little while?"

"Yeah, let me put my camera away and get cleaned up," I answered him. "I'll meet you down there."

I hurried to my room and put my camera on the bed. I had kept all of my stuff together, so there really wasn't a need to pack. I rushed through a shower, removing all the sand and sweat from the day. The only other outfit I had clean was for the next day, so I just put on my black nightgown that went to my knees. It wasn't obviously pajamas, but I don't think it would have bothered him either way.

When I arrived, he was halfway through a joint. I sat beside him on the outdoor loveseat.

Edward offered it to me, and I took it from his fingers. I took a long slow drag before passing it back to him.

"Thank you," I said quietly.

"You're welcome." He took a hit and passed it back. I took another drag and relaxed back into the cushion with my feet underneath me. "Thank you," he said to me.

"For what?"

He didn't look at me, shrugging one shoulder up lazily.

"Everything."

I shook my head. "I haven't done anything special."

"That's not true in the least." Silence hung in the air. Edward lit the joint again, passing it over to me. I took one last hit before declining more. "Will I be able to see all the pictures you've taken?"

"Oh, yeah. The magazine should show you everything," I assured him.

"No. I mean for your personal collection."

"Oh," I was a little surprised for some reason "Yeah, if you want to. I can give you the link to where I upload them. I forgot to earlier in the week."

He pulled out his phone, opening up the notepad feature. "Why don't you give me all your contact information? Just so I know I have it. I'm sure I have it somewhere but just so it's easy."

I took it from him. I gave him my cell number again which he already had. My email. My home address. The website I kept my personal pictures for only my friends and family.

It was just after ten. I placed the phone faced down on the table.

The lights of the city looked so beautiful. Clouds dotted the horizon that seemed so far away. It was an amazing view. The wind had picked up, and the air felt great. I could see why he would want to live there.

We sat in silence for a long time. He finished his smoke and quietly sipped his water. He snubbed the butt in the tray with a little sigh.

I didn't want to, but I stood, "I need to head to bed. I have a long day tomorrow."

"Right. Of course," he said very quietly.

"If I don't see you before I leave, it was *marvelous*, and I'll remember this week for the

rest of my life. If I ever have grandchildren, I'll get to tell them about the week I spent with Eddie Cullen," I said lightly, but I could feel tears begin to well up in my eyes. I couldn't let him see them so I rushed away. "Goodnight," I told him when I got to the door.

"Goodnight," Edward replied softly. When I looked back at the glass door, he was watching me leave with the saddest expression. He forced a smile before picking up another joint and lighting it. I turned away and went back to my room for the final night.

I didn't cry, but I had to wipe tears away.