



Forty-six: Epilogue

I swear I had never been this hungry in my entire life. I wanted to eat everything, especially since the doctor said I shouldn't because I was diabetic. It wasn't so bad that I had to take insulin or pills, and it could be controlled by diet. I kind of wished I could take medicine so I could cheat a little more often, but I knew for my sake, I shouldn't. It was healthier.

At least the doctors suggested it would most likely go away once I had the baby.

My stomach growled loudly as I tried to roll over but couldn't because my nearly nine-month belly was in the way. I groaned and rolled to the other side but experienced the

same problem. I prodded the bed that should have been my husband, but he was gone. That didn't surprise me, though. Edward had always been a morning person. I had become less so as my pregnancy went on.

I rolled flat onto my back and stared at the ceiling. When I pulled out the earplugs, the sounds of Tokyo came flooding in. It was just too loud all the time to sleep without them. It kind of reminded me of New York City, but I think I liked Manhattan better. At least I knew the language there.

Don't get me wrong, I loved Japan. Not like Edward did, but he spoke Japanese beautifully. Luckily, there were enough people that could communicate in perfect English to get by. But I still felt awkward. And dumb.

Honestly, the best part of Tokyo was the food. I was kind of in love with the traditional breakfast, even though I shouldn't have been eating it for several reasons. It was a raw egg yolk served on steamed rice with broiled fish and seaweed. It was delicious. My husband wasn't very keen on me devouring uncooked food, worried it would make me sick.

It was actually how we found out I was pregnant. We had only been living in the city for a couple of months, and I was consuming it almost daily. Then I started vomiting. Of course, it was only two days of that before he whisked me off worriedly to the doctor. Edward practically fainted with joy. I just upchucked all over the physician- the poor man.

I sat up a little more in bed and roughly rubbed my hand over my eyes before I glanced at the clock. It was almost ten, so it was no wonder I was hungry. It had been over twelve hours since I had eaten. I hardly went three where I didn't.

"Good morning, love," Edward beamed as he came through the door with a tray full of goodies. Including the breakfast that my mouth was just watering over with a pot of tea and some pickled plums. My blood testing supplies were on there too. I had to test my sugar before I ate.

"You didn't have to do that," I smiled brightly as I sat up all the way. First, I popped my vitamin into my mouth and took a sip before I picked up my already prepared finger poker. Edward took my fingertip and wiped it down with a swab before he took the lance from my grip.

"It's your birthday, Bella. Of course, I do." I hissed as he stabbed the side of the right middle one. He milked it for blood before bringing the test strip up to it. "Sorry," he mumbled.

"How does it look?" I asked when the machine beeped. I had already wiped off the tip on my napkin and started stirring the egg into the rice.

"Ninety-five. Not bad considering you ate ice cream last night."

I frowned at his disapproving face. "It was that, or I killed someone."

Edward ignored me as he wrote my numbers in the thin notebook we kept for it and poured me another cup of tea. "So, I have to go in for a little while-" he began, but I interrupted him with a whine.

"Why?" I asked.

"There's an issue I have to deal with. It'll only be a few hours. Besides, you won't need me. I've got you a couple of birthday presents to keep you busy." He didn't wait for me to respond. "Come on in!"

"Hey, baby!" My best friend squealed when she hopped inside of the room. I nearly upturned my breakfast tray. She ran over to me and wrapped her arms around my neck.

Alice and Jasper were living in Chicago. They had promoted him to the main office, and he was working a decent position that made tons of money. And she had her own clothing shop that seemed to run on word of mouth. Mainly Carmen's. Her youngest, a cute little boy, was always draped in Alice's latest fashions.

I missed her. I hadn't seen her in months, besides on Skype. We were planning a visit around Christmas time, but it was so far away. I was already counting down the days to the Cullen-Masen holidays with our tiny bundle of joy.

Of course, I started to cry as soon as I saw her. I sobbed at the drop of a hat. We wrapped our arms around each other and hugged for a long time until my urge to eat became too strong.

"When did you come in?" I asked, shoving a big bite into my mouth.

"Last night," she grinned. "Jasper's here too. He's got to do some work, though. You know how it is. Are you ready for my gift?"

"Aren't you enough?" I bit my bottom lip as I took the envelope from her fingers. I opened it up and instantly beamed. "Wow, all-out spa treatments. This is one of the nicest places in town. That's so awesome! Thank you!"

"You are very welcome, but you're going to have to hurry!"

"My second present," Edward interrupted with a smile. "I have a reservation at that place you love so much. You know, with the cooked sushi that you can eat gobs of."

“Oh, god! Yummy! Yay!” I giggled stupidly, practically shoveling the food in. “What time?” I mumbled through a bite.

“Six. And you have a full day of treatments.” My husband leaned over and kissed the top of my head, careful not to sully his tie since he was already dressed for work. “I love you, and I’ll be home around five.”

“Okay. I love you too,” I beamed. He grinned happily and wiped a bit of egg away from my lips. My best friend giggled at us.

The spa was divine and just what I needed, though I couldn’t enjoy the massage in the same way Alice could. She only smiled as I complained about how you didn’t realize how much you missed laying on your stomach until you couldn’t anymore. I knew she understood from all the surgeries she had when she was a teenager. She also listened to me whine about how much I missed our friends and family and how it had been months since I had seen them.

“Can I make a confession?” Alice inquired as we were getting our nails done. Our hair was wet, freshly washed and deep-conditioned with towels wrapped around our heads. Our faces were green, and we looked like aliens.

“Sure.” I glanced in her direction. It was so nice to be with my best friend. I had missed her so much, and Skype made up for nothing.

“We’re not just here for work and your birthday,” she began, keeping her eyes closed tightly.

“Oh?” I mumbled in curiosity. What other reasons could they have? The vacation was probably enough to come. Tokyo was remarkable. Who wouldn’t want a free trip? I knew I wouldn’t turn it down.

“The adoption went through...” She trailed off, letting the words sink.

Alice had gotten baby fever around her twenty-ninth birthday, and they went through their options. There were so many of them. She didn’t want a surrogate just to bring another human into the world when there were so many of them that needed love. Finally, they decided on adopting a child from China. They had already been waiting for months, and I knew the dragging was getting to my poor friend.

“That’s amazing!” I squealed. “When? When do you get to pick the baby up? Is it a girl or a boy?”

Alice was practically shining with happiness, her outside reflecting the inside. “It’s a girl, and she’s about a month old. We’ll get her next Friday. We’re going to fly from here and get her before we go home.”

“Oh, honey!” I wailed, once again starting to cry, but so was she. We left trails running down the green masks as we got out of our chairs and hugged each other tightly. Our attendants didn’t look too pleased, but they said nothing, even if we seemed like idiots to them.

Alice’s gift to me besides herself and the spa was a handmade maternity dress from her shop. It was baby blue and went all the way to the floor, the extra-long sleeves the same color but sheer. There were crystals right between my breasts where the fabric gathered above my bump. There were even comfortable flats to match. I adored it. I slipped on the earrings my husband had gotten me the previous Christmas. It was a tradition in his mind to buy me jewelry for the holidays. They went along with my beautiful antique wedding ring that had been his mother’s. But I didn’t need much else. The gown was lovely enough on its own.

Edward had to finish up more work than he expected at the office, so he said he and Jasper would meet us at the restaurant. Angela, who came with us from the U.S., already picked up their outfits for the night. I wasn’t exactly pleased, but I had my friend to keep me happy.

Taking my sugar in the car, I was careful not to get any blood on my dress before going inside. I was going to splurge since it was my birthday, but I still wanted to keep track of my numbers. I didn’t want to be fussed at by either my doctors or Edward.

He was in the lobby with Jasper, both looking very handsome in their tuxes. It was going to be a nice evening, though I wasn’t sure what else he had planned after. I could feel all my frustration at him melt away. I instantly went to my gorgeous husband and kissed him soundly on the mouth.

“Hi there, birthday girl. Don’t you look phenomenal,” he commented as he beamed.

“Thanks to Alice and the spa. And thank you,” I hummed, laying my head on his chest for just a moment before my stomach growled. “Come on, I’m starving.”

“Of course.” Edward nodded towards the hostess. She smiled and waved her hand toward the dining room.

The only open table in the small restaurant was in the very middle, which I found a little odd. What was even stranger was how quiet everyone else seemed to be. And not one of them had food, just wine or other drinks. It wasn’t that early in the dinner service. They should have had something. I thought that maybe there was a problem in the kitchen.

And then I really looked around. I glanced at every face in the room and began to sob hard. Fat, happy tears rolled down my cheeks and messed up my makeup as my hands flew to my mouth.

“Oh, don’t cry, Aunt Bella!” The seven-year-old Tanya wailed as she ran over to me. But she was already weeping too, her arms wrapping around my too wide belly. She was so sensitive. Carmen, with her baby boy on her hip, was soon to follow with a toddling Irina. Kate was in Seth’s arms. Esme, Sue, and Renee, all my mothers, were starting to cry as they came to hug me too.

“Oh great, it’s a crying fest,” I heard my father say. I laughed and sniffled as I wiped my eyes with the back of my hand.

“I know, right?” I giggled as I gulped in for air. I hugged him tightly and then Carlisle and Eleazar as they greeted me. Then Phil, my stepfather.

My entire family was there. Every person I cared about was in the room with me, and I couldn’t have been happier.

“I’m sorry I was late this afternoon. Charlie, Sue, and Seth’s plane was delayed a couple of hours,” I heard Edward whisper in my ear from behind me. I whirled around and threw my arms around his neck, kissing him as hard and as long as I dared. My feet dangled in the air as he held me up and spun me once. The only thing that stopped him was the baby kicking so hard he could feel it against his abdomen.

“I think he’s pleased,” I said when he put me down, my hand resting on the top of my stomach.

“Yes, she is,” Edward smirked. He wanted a girl. I wanted a boy. Honestly, it didn’t matter. I was just happy to be having Edward’s baby. We decided to be surprised.

“Alright, are we going to eat or what?” My father asked loudly, making me laugh again.

“Yes, please! I’m so hungry!” I complained before I found a chair.

“From what I can tell, you’re always hungry,” Alice teased, patting my hand. Smiling, I only nodded my head.

“Maybe you’re eating for more than just two,” Renee commented.

I rolled my eyes, but Esme was already off and running with that idea. “Oh, wouldn’t that be great? Twins! I’d love more grandbabies,” she smiled.

“Well, you have two more coming. Don’t you think that should be enough to hold you over?” Emmett asked as he patted Rose’s slight tummy. She was only four months along, but she handled pregnancy beautifully. Far better than I ever did.

“Never enough!” My mother-in-law grinned almost wickedly. “Come on! Let’s feed the poor pregnant women before they starve! We have all week to talk.”

The entire day was an unexpected and pleasant surprise. But when it came to Edward and our relationship, I was getting positively used to them.