



Chapter Fifty-Six-

"All my girls!" Edward shouted as his sisters and all of his nieces piled in through the door, their poor husbands trailing behind while carrying all their stuff for the day. I stood back, just happy to watch.

There was already a large grill set up outside with a roaring fire going, and I had spent the morning cooking in preparation for our day with Edward's family. He was so excited. Too excited, in fact, to go back to sleep when Jasper went to work. He made me a breakfast in bed of coffee and toast with fruit, snuggling in closely as he happily spoke about his plans for when he wanted them to visit our home with me. He told me to invite my niece Claire as well.

I found him so irresistibly sweet that I attacked him. We made love as the sun rose over the horizon, making the entire room shine gold. It was a perfect way to start the morning. He told me over and over again how he loved me and adored me as he slowly moved on top of me, savoring each other thoroughly. Afterward, he held me in his arms until we finally began to prepare for the day.

"Uncle Tony!" The middle three nieces, who were all around four or five, shouted in unison. He scooped them up together in his big arms for a second, making them squeal in delight. He then took the baby, Ava, from his sister Irina's arms before pressing a kiss on the lovely mother's cheek.

"What a pretty little doll you are in your little yellow sundress," he cooed at Ava, and she grabbed at his beard, pulling his face close to hers with her mouth opened completely wide and her little pink tongue hanging out a little bit as she drooled.

"Oh, she's trying to do kisses," Irina said quickly, reaching for the baby before she could hurt her brother, but he turned away from her.

"Are you giving me kisses?" He questioned the baby, giving her loud smacking kisses all over her little face. She giggled, her head falling back happily. Edward blew a loud raspberry on her neck, making her squeal.

"Something smells so good," Tanya complimented as she brought me into a quick hug. "This is such a cute place, Tony."

"I know. I'm thinking about buying it. As a vacation home," he said casually, but he wasn't looking at me as he said it.

"What? Really?" I turned to him in surprise. This was the first I had heard him say this.

"Yes?" He almost said as if he was scared of my answer.

"Good. I like it, too," I told him, reaching for the baby in his arms. He was so surprised he gave her over without question, looking at me with wide, shocked eyes. I wasn't sure why. I brought the sweet child onto my hip and gave her cheek a kiss. "Mine," I mumbled as I walked off with her towards the kitchen.

"Actually, I was going to buy it for you," he called to my back.

"You say that, but it would be for both of us, obviously. And we're going to come back a lot to visit your family. I wouldn't doubt a few times a year. If we're going to stay for months at a time sometimes, it makes sense to have a homey place we're both comfortable." I bounced the baby as she grabbed onto the end of my braid with both of her hands. "Though we'll need something bigger in a few years when you want to start making these." I nuzzled the sweet smelling baby. She had just been bathed and covered in lotion. "But, it's perfect to start."

"You really don't know how happy you just made me," he said to me with so much warmth and love in his voice. Edward came over to me quickly and pressed a kiss to my mouth. The baby tugged at my hair and pulled her open mouth to my face. "No, my kisses." He pressed happy kisses all over my face and then all over the baby's cheek.

"Oh, my god, Uncle Tony!" One of the older nieces complained at his wild show of affection.

“What, Ruby? Jealous? Come here, baby girl. I’ll give you kisses too,” he teased as he began to chase her around the room for his kiss. She laughed and struggled in his arms when he caught her but quickly turned to wrap her arms around his neck. Her feet dangled a foot off the floor as he swung the pre-teen around easily. He gave her a big smacking kiss on the forehead.

“Yo, Tony,” I said in my best Jersey accent. “Check on the grill. We should start that chicken if we want to feed all these people soon.”

He dropped Ruby to her feet, her flip-flops popping loudly on the wooden floor as he did.

“Yes, Ms. Isabella,” he said in his worst southern accent. I gave him a dirty look, earning a chuckle from him.

“I hope that’s not what you think I sound like,” I told him as Ava and I, her still on my hip, went into the kitchen. His sisters following behind me.

“Ruby, Chloe, Mia,” Edward called to his oldest nieces loudly to get their attention. “There are a couple of game consoles and plenty of controllers for everyone. Take turns with the littles, okay?”

“What games do you have?” Mia, the quietest of his nieces, asked. She had pretty red hair and lots of freckles scattered on her nose. She looked just like her mother, Sasha.

“I have lots, and whatever I don’t have I’ll get for you,” he promised the lot of them.

“Don’t go overboard!” Carmen warned the girls. “Tony, you spoil them.”

“Uh, yeah?” He said sarcastically as he went outside.

The four husbands followed once they all had beers. They just wanted to be away from the loud kids as they debated on their video game choices. They finally decided on a fighting game on the Switch and was happily taking turns fighting with one another, the biggest helping the smallest.

I worked in the kitchen with Edward’s sisters gladly, his niece on my hip. She was a happy baby who was content to hold onto my braid and chew on a teething biscuit while the adults chatted.

“I can take her back if you want,” Irina, her mother, offered weakly. She was clearly tired.

“Are you kidding? I wanna seriously keep her. We’ll just take her back to LA with us. Don’t worry, I’ll raise her as my own, and you know *Tony* is going to make sure she’ll be spoiled

rotten," I teased her with a big smile.

"I actually think he'd like that," Tanya said with a smirk as she sat at the breakfast table in the kitchen.

"I think he would too," I told her honestly with a laugh. "He really does want all of you to come to Los Angeles with us. He loves you all so much. I think honestly, besides Jasper, you might be his best friends."

"That's sweet," Sasha said, taking a bite of pineapple off the fruit tray. "We miss him, too. But America has been good for him."

"You've been good for him," Carmen smiled.

"You think so?" I asked curiously, wiping the baby's mouth as I rested against the counter. She smiled at me as I caressed her cheek and I had a real pang of wanting.

Oh, I want this.

I liked chatting with his family while holding a baby that looked like him. I liked knowing he was out there laughing and having a good time with his brothers in law that he considered good friends. I liked hearing the laughter of all the kids in the room beside us. Oh, I really wanted *this*.

"You're great for him. Terrible for Mum," Tanya snickered. "Good on him for standing up to her. She's not talked to any of us since she heard we were coming to see you in the hospital. You're lovely though, she'll come around."

"Doesn't matter if she does," Edward mumbled when he came into the kitchen. "Bella is lovely though, you're right," he told her. He came to me and eagerly took his baby niece back. "My Ava loves her Aunt Bella already, doesn't she?" He cooed to her in his sweet babying voice.

"Aunt Bella?" I smirked at him.

"Oh yes," he said with an innocent smile. "Soon enough."

"So, I went from one niece to having eight in a day? Wow," I teased him dryly, but I couldn't help but smile back. "I *think* we need to be married first."

"Soon," he said in a soft promise.

"Mm, I don't see a ring on that finger, Tony," Sasha teased him.

"I got *that*. Don't you worry about that," he answered his sister with a cocky smile. He bounced the baby. "I got plans," he wiggled his eyebrows at me, making me roll my eyes.

Then his words dawned on me.

"Wait... Do you already have a ring?" I asked quietly. I watched as he mulled over his words, adjusting the baby's dress as she rested on his muscular forearm.

He did. He had a ring and a prenup. My man was *serious*.

"I bought it in New York." He looked at me from over the top of the baby who was fascinated with his beard. Edward nuzzled it to the top of her head, lightly kissing her hair as he continued to watch my reaction.

"That was even before you told me you loved me! Why? And... *How?* How do you even know it's the right size?" I laughed at his dramatics. I totally believed that he did.

"Alice."

I gasped, "she knows?" I couldn't have imagined my best friend would have been able to keep that information from me for very long.

"She knows I got you a cute little ring for Christmas. Yeah." He smiled at me charmingly then reached for my right hand and kissed the James Avery ring from him that I never took off.

"Oh, you're sneaky," I accused him.

"Very." He leaned down and kissed me while still holding the baby.

"When did you even have time?" I questioned. "You were sick or with me the entire time."

"The morning of the show."

"Edward," I laughed. "Really?"

"Yes, of course. I told you I knew right away. Let's just say when I saw it I knew it was perfect for you. Anyway," he smirked a little naughtily. "It's hidden in the house somewhere. Good luck trying to find it."

"It's in your office. On the shelf," I said automatically.

"Hey!" He laughed. "Wait. You haven't already found it, have you?"

"No, you just put everything that you really care about on that shelf. You hoard your special things in one space. I won't look for it, though. I'm sure it's beautiful," I promised him. "You have great taste. Besides, I'm not the impatient one," I teased. "But, I already know where it is anyway. I can see it in my mind's eye."

Edward looked at me in a funny sort of challenging way. "Do you think you know me so well?"

"It's in the Plexie statue that I gave you for your birthday. In its little secret compartment. Where else would you put it?"

"You just think you know *everything*..." he trailed off, turning red in the face so quickly that it made me laugh loudly.

"It's perfect. Keep it there," I said softly. "It's a perfect place to keep it safe until probably like eleven fifty-nine on the twenty-first of October," I teased him some more.

"You think you know *everything*," he said again with a sweet little laugh. "Aunt Bella thinks she's so smart and knows what I'm going to do." He bounced his baby niece as he walked out of the kitchen to go back out to where the grill was. I couldn't help but laugh joyously.

"Oh, my god! You like it so much," I called after him. He just waved his hand behind him as he disappeared around the corner. "Hey! He took the baby..." I whined a little. "I was playing with that."

"Wow," Carmen said slowly, looking over at Sasha. They had a conversation with their eyes, both smiling a little bit. Then they both made a giddy little sound before starting to laugh. "You're going to get married?"

"I think we decided on the term pre-fiance," I replied, feeling my own cheeks getting a little red. I almost forgot that they were there for a minute. Edward always made the world melt away when he was looking at me the way he did. "He's not asked yet, but he knows the answer already. He's just been told he can't ask before we've been together for a year."

"Yes, make him work for it," Tanya teased happily. "Oh, yes! How fun! Good. Tony is so happy. Welcome to the insane asylum, babe."

"Thanks. Most of the inmates seem nice. Though someone might need their meds adjusted," I mumbled as I went to the fridge to get a glass of white wine.

"Oh, make me one as well!" Tanya said eagerly. "And, I agree with you. Mum has been absolutely terrible since she retired and Tony moved. Good god, I don't know how Irina is taking

it. I had to put my foot down when I had Sophia. I decided not to put her on the check-out list at school just recently. She doesn't know, and I'm not going to tell her, but she's going to have a fit."

"In the front office at the pre-school while she's trying to check her out without your permission?" I snorted, handing her a glass.

"Exactly. Probably to go get her another haircut we didn't want her to have."

"Oh, no," I said in surprise. "She took your kid to get her haircut without telling you? Um, hell no."

"Right?!" Both Sasha and Tanya said at the same time.

"Your mother doesn't need to be making any fashion decisions for anyone else if she's going to have that terrible unnaturally solid black hair and too much tanner. And, that much filler and botox in her face because clearly, she has no idea what she's doing," I muttered a bit sourly.

"Oh, we're going to get along so well," Carmen said pleasantly, making me laugh. "Don't let her get to you. Tony loves you, and I can see why. We support him. We just want the best for him."

"Thanks. That's really nice to hear from you. Your grandparents have been very kind, too. We're going to see them again tomorrow," I informed them. "I'm going to make them dinner."

"That should be fun. Our Grands are lovely," Irina promised with a smile. "Now, what can we actually do to help? We're just sitting around eating your food and drinking your wine."

After our wonderful dinner where we all ate outside on the beach, I began to take pictures of Edward and his nieces while he played with them in the sand, digging moles and building castles. I took them with his sisters and all of the family together as well. Most weren't posed though. His smile was so infectious. They all had the same slightly crooked big grin that spread over their cherub-like high cheeks.

We slipped into the bathroom in our bedroom to get changed to go swimming when the kids finally began to beg to play in the water. They had all taken turns in one of the two bathrooms getting changed, the youngest stripping happily in the living room with zero modesty. There was no such thing under the age of five. We went last as Edward helped the girls prepare the toys he had bought for them to play with in the water and I put all the food away with the help of a couple of the husband's while their wives readied their children.

"Hey." I tugged him quickly into a kiss before he could even completely close the door. He moaned into my mouth, quickly shutting the door and pushing me against it. "Hi," I smiled up at him.

"Hey, beautiful." He put his forehead on mine.

"Are you happy?"

"Very," he assured me, doing *that* smile again. He was practically glowing. Jasper was right. He was the sun.

"I love seeing you with your family," I told him truthfully. "I like being around people who love you as much as I do."

"All we need is Jasper, and I'll have my top like... fifteen people... in the same room."

"Oh, and how are we ranked?" I teased him with my chin on his chest.

"You, Jasper in a very close second, Tanya, Irina, Sasha, Carmen and then the girls in some order," he teased back. "I like Eleazar and Garrett a lot, too. And, Liam. Vasilii is fine. I don't know him as well."

"I don't know who is who," I admitted. "I need name tags."

"Eleazar is Carmen's, and Garrett is Sasha's. Liam is Tanya's. Vasilii is Irina's husband."

"I love that you think that helps me in some way," I giggled, giving him another kiss. "I'll just call all of them *sugar* or *honey*, and I won't have to remember anyone's name."

"That works." He began to unbutton my shirt for me. "Hm, care for a quickie?"

I laughed at his sudden mood change. "Half of your family is just right out there, Eddie."

"I know. Kind of makes it extra fun," he joked, leaning down to kiss my neck lightly. And then a little harder until my knees went weak and I was only being held up by his hand that had found its way underneath my opened shirt.

"We don't have a condom," I said to him as I undid his khaki shorts and slid my hand over his erection. "So, why don't you be patient and wait until tonight?"

"But tonight seems like forever," Edward pouted a little playfully.

"You fucked me this morning," I laughed again.

"I love that you think that makes any difference," he told me jokingly, using my own words from earlier. "I want to be inside of you right now," he said rather abruptly in a deep rich tone that made something tightening in my stomach.

"Damn," I breathed. "You're mean. I'm trying to go out there and be wholesome, and you're trying to turn me on. This is worse than with your friend's though."

"Sorry," he smirked.

"No, you're not."

"Yeah, you're right." He undid my shorts and pushed them forcefully down my hips along with my panties.

"Are you even capable of a quickie?" I asked as I pulled down his pants as well.

"Probably not," he smirked, pulling off my shirt the rest of the way and then pulled off my sports bra over my head. Edward quickly leaned down and brought my nipple into his mouth. He then kissed down my stomach until he was on his knees in front of me. Lightly he kissed my belly button, rolling his tongue down between my legs.

"Fuck," I whispered when as tongue touched my clit.

Then he pulled away, pulling my black long sleeved swimsuit off the bathroom counter. Edward unzipped it for me. "Shall we get changed?"

"You bastard!" I complained, rubbing my hand between my legs in annoyance at being turned on like that purposefully. He pulled my fingers away and licked again just once. "Oh, *fuck* me," I whined.

"I would, but I don't have a condom," he teased me, kissing my belly button again.

"I swear to Christ, Edward-" I began to complain, but then he quickly forced his fingers inside of me and began to lick me aggressively. "Oh, god," I gasped, weaving my fingers into his hair.

It was shocking how swiftly he got me off, pulling his finger out gently and pulling away with a kiss on my stomach.

"How is that for quick?" He said cockily.

"Wow," I breathed, my brain fizzing and popping.

He chuckled, pressing his face in between my breasts. I leaned down and brought his mouth into a deep kiss, his hand sliding over my ass.

Edward picked up my swimsuit again.

The way he tugged it up to my legs, slowly standing up to bring it up for my arms, just turned me on more and he knew it. He only zipped it to just below my breasts before finally turning to put on his wetsuit.

"I'm glad this covers everything. You two have covered me in hickeys." I zipped it up the rest of the way. When Edward had his suit up, I zipped him into it as well, capturing his mouth into another quick passionate kiss.

"Want to ride my board today?"

"*Mm*, yes," I hummed, making him chuckle. "I was just trying to."

He unzipped my suit to the top of my breasts before opening up the bathroom door and going out to be back with his family. Edward could be an incredible tease. The *bastard*.

I needed another minute. Thankfully I had the excuse of sunscreen on my legs to give me a moment to myself as I cleaned up and recovered.

While I was covering my face in lotion Jasper snuck into the bathroom and closed the door behind him. He was still in his work shirt, his swim bag on his arm. When he dropped it to the floor, he pulled me into a quick hug.

"Oh, look at you, dove." He snuggled his face into my neck, breathing in deeply. Jasper held me for a long minute quietly.

"Long day?" I could feel the stress tight in his body.

"Longest."

"I'm sorry. Is there something I can do to help?" I asked softly, stroking the back of his neck.

"I don't know. I like this," he said, squeezing me. "I guess you could show me your tits. That would probably help, too."

I laughed, pulled back a little and unzipped my suit below my breasts so he could take in the full view of cleavage. "Between you and Eddie, I don't know how I'm supposed to be around

children now.”

“Oh, what did *Eddie* do, hm?” He purred, pulling the suit open a little bit. Jasper leaned down and kissed the top of my breasts.

“Jasper, we shouldn’t do this. Seriously. His family is out there. If you don’t stop, I’m going to literally jump you because he left me so horny.” He began to grab my ass as I was talking. “Oh, my god. You’re *both* bastards.”

He laughed as I pulled away and practically went running for the door. Jasper grabbed me quickly from behind before I could put my hand on the knob. Slowly he turned me around and brought my lips into a gentle kiss before bringing up the zipper of my swimsuit to the very top.

“You look very pretty,” he complimented me, kissing my nose. I put my hands on either side of his face and brushed my nose against his. We both tried to take in a deep calming breath.

“Thank you,” I whispered back. “Do you want to eat before you surf? I can make you a plate if you like. We have a lot of leftovers.”

“I’ll eat later. I wanna go swim with the kids first. Thank you, though.” He kissed my lips lightly just once. It wasn’t enough.

“Kiss me really good once before I have to go out there and pretend to be *normal*,” I pleaded softly.

He quickly obliged, taking my face between his big strong hands and kissed me deeply and passionately, pinning me entirely to the door as his body pressed fully against mine. When Jasper pulled away, I was gasping for air.

“You’re the best kisser,” I told him breathlessly. “Please kiss Edward and me some more like that tonight.”

“With pleasure, dove.”

When I came out Edward, and most of his brother in laws were surfing, along with a couple of his nieces. All of his sisters were playing in the shallow parts of the water with the younger girls. I decided this was the perfect time to start taking more pictures.

Edward had taken Tanya's daughter Sophia out on his board, paddling out far while holding the tiny four-year-olds solidly in his strong arms. She was grinning wildly, and so was he. I shot a couple of dozen shots of them before taking some of his family before they had

noticed me or the camera. I had taken close to two hundred in the short five or so minutes before his sister Irina turned to me, waving for me to join them.

I came to the edge of the water, sitting on the sand with my camera still.

“You look incredible. I can see why Tony wanted to buy that for you,” Carmen commented.

“Oh, thanks,” I said bashfully, biting my lip. I took a picture to hide my face.

Irina was sitting beside her husband Vasili who was holding their chubby eight or nine-month-old daughter. Ava splashed happily on her father’s lap, kicking her little feet in the water. I laid on my stomach so I could get her from a very low angle. And then she reached for me. It was the perfect shot.

“Uncle Jasper!” Four of the girls shouted and bounded out of the water at full speed towards him, leaving their boards and toys in the sand. They literally threw themselves at him, their wet bodies hitting him with a loud slap.

I quickly took their picture, dozens in just a few seconds, smiling to myself.

“Someone is popular,” I laughed, enjoying their sweet moments together.

“Oh, Jasper is great with the girls. They all love him,” Tanya replied, watching their display. “He’s probably babysat all of them just as much as Anthony.”

“Ruby has a crush on him,” Carmen chuckled. We watched as the hyper girl spoke to him animatedly and he spoke back just as cheerfully. He could make anyone feel like the center of the universe.

“Who could blame her? He is gorgeous.” I sat up so I could take pictures of them from a different angle.

“That man’s arms are...” Tanya trailed off. “Mmmm...”

“Yes, they are,” Irina mumbled under her breath and looked away from her husband. Her sisters began to laugh. “Stop! I didn’t sleep with him. Tony didn’t mean it like that! Don’t be mean!”

“Yeah, you just wanted to,” Tanya looked at her knowingly.

“Get stuffed,” Irina pointed at her.

Jasper came up to us with two of the girls literally hanging off of his arms as he lifted them in the air. Mia, the shy one, was walking in front of them and talking to him in a soft almost nervous whisper but she was smiling. He spoke back to her so softly that I couldn't hear his words.

"Hello there, ladies. I must say it is always a pleasure to be surrounded by so many beautiful women," he said loudly when he came to the very edge of the water.

"Aren't you charming," Carmen teased him. "Girls, get off that poor man. You're too heavy to still do that."

"No, I've been working out. I've got them." He made his muscles big for them, lifting them higher and making them laugh.

I was loving all the pictures I was getting. He was being a showoff for the girls and probably for all the women in the group. It seemed to be his style.

"How have you been?" Tanya called to him, looking up at him in a way I could perfectly understand. He looked so good in his suit. She brought her sunglasses down to take in the view a little better. Her husband was too busy surfing to notice her ogling.

"Eh, well... *shite* until very recently, but it looks like things are getting much better. Looks as if I'll be moving very soon." He tried to hide his smile, but he did a poor job of it. It curled at the corner of his pink lips, his cute gaped grin just visible underneath his well-groomed silly mustache.

"Oh, where to?" Ruby asked him anxiously.

"Oh, just with your Uncle Tony in America. So, are you going to come to visit me?" He asked her with a sweet smile. The girl visibly blushed.

"Yes!" She said quickly, the other three girls agreeing as well.

"We're going to have rent a hotel out for everyone," I said jokingly. "Actually, Eddie would probably love that."

"He absolutely would," Jasper agreed with me. "Dove, if you want, I'll get some pictures of you with Tony later. I'm pretty good with a camera myself. If you trust me with yours," he offered suddenly when he realized that I had my camera in my hands.

"Of course I do." I smiled at him, taking a quick picture of his face as he looked down at me. He smiled a little, and I took another picture of it. "I'd like that. Thank you."

"Are you going to try to surf today?" He asked me. Though we had played some, I had not stood on a surfboard in the days before, just sat. I shook my head a little, making him laugh. "Why?"

"Deep waters scare me. I'm not a strong enough swimmer," I told him. "I've lived in New York for a decade and a half. Not a lot of swimming there unless you're in a pool on a rooftop somewhere."

"I'll take you out. I won't let you drown."

"Take the girls. They want to go."

Jasper clicked his tongue jokingly. "I'll get you out there before you go," he said to me. "You'll enjoy it."

"I'm enjoying this," I replied. "Edward will love all of these pictures. I think I'll make them into a book for him."

"Oh, can I have a copy?" Sasha asked quickly.

"Of course. I'll send everyone one," I promised them. "Your family is so beautiful," I told his sisters.

"I think soon enough it'll be your family, too. I mean, we've already adopted Jasper despite our mother's best efforts," Carmen joked, smiling up at the sweet blond man.

Edward came towards us finally while still sitting on his board in the shallower water, the small child hanging off the edge so she could look into the ocean with her snorkel. He smiled brightly at his new secret boyfriend while still holding onto his niece's ankle so that she wouldn't slide off into the water.

"Hello, darling," Jasper called to Edward in the water, earning a bigger, cheesier, smile.

"So, has he always called him that?" I questioned quietly, almost to myself.

"It started as a joke, and they never stopped," Tanya replied to me. "Since school at least. A decade, maybe more. They used to call each other stupid pet names all the time."

"What about the wrestling?"

"They were on the wrestling team together," Irina answered me. She gave me wide eyes that I instantly understood. Jasper looked really good in his wrestling uniform. I bet they both did. "They've been doing that since they were like twelve."

"Oh, I bet they were so obnoxious as teenagers," I teased. Jasper stuck his tongue out at me.

"He was. Tony was a shy quiet thing before he started doing his videos," Sasha said as she played with her daughter's hair. She sat in the water right in front of her with a couple of mermaid dolls. Her sister also had toys and was playing beside her in the waist-deep clear blue water. All gifts from their loving and wonderful uncle.

I was learning so much about him this trip. It was like he was a whole new man to me. But, it was a great thing. I loved it and I just loved him even more.

"I can see that," I told them honestly.

"Isabella, put that camera away and come here," my boyfriend called to me over the loud ocean waves. I snorted at his use of my name. I walked back up to the blanket on the beach with my bag and put it away before coming to the edge of the water.

He picked Sophia up and put her in the water. She swam the few feet to her mother. I waded out to him in the shallow waters, and he easily brought me onto it so that I was sitting between his legs. He pulled my body tight to his with his arm around my waist. He pressed a warm kiss to my cheek.

"I want to do that too, Uncle Tony!" One of his middle nieces called to him.

"Well, come here," he answered her. She instantly began to doggie paddle towards him quickly. When she was close, he hoisted her onto the big board in front of us. She stood up to her full height, and I brought my hands up so she could hold them to balance herself.

Jasper joined us in the water, his board pointing in the opposite direction as he held onto one of the other four or five-year-olds that I kept forgetting the names of. They all looked so much alike. I only knew Sophia, the four-year-old, for sure. And, Ava the baby.

"Happy?" Jasper asked Edward the same question I had asked him alone in the bathroom. His smile was undeniable and brilliant.

"Extremely," he replied, giving a soft pat on his shoulder as he passed us in the water. It was only a moment, but I knew exactly how much it meant to both of them. I felt like my heart was going to pound out of my chest with my own happiness.