

(Notes: this scene was clipped from Chapter 11 "Complications." It bugged me to remove it, but I couldn't put my finger on why that was, so I let it go. When it was too late to put it back, I finally realized what was bothering me. Though I refer to Bella's clumsiness in gym several times, I never really show it in action. This was the one time that Edward was "watching," and thus the natural place to showcase that clumsiness. Ha ha—and now my explanation is almost longer than the outtake!!)

Badminton

I walked into the gym, lightheaded, wobbly. I drifted to the locker room, changing in a trancelike state, only vaguely aware that there were other people surrounding me. Reality didn't fully set in until I was handed a racquet. It wasn't heavy, yet it felt very unsafe in my hand. I could see a few of the other kids in class eyeing me furtively. Coach Clapp ordered us to pair up into teams.

Mercifully, some vestiges of Mike's chivalry still survived; he came to stand beside me.

"Do you want to be a team?" he asked cheerfully.

"Thanks, Mike—you don't have to do this, you know." I grimaced.

"Don't worry, I'll keep out of your way," he grinned. Sometimes it was so easy to be fond of Mike.

It didn't go smoothly. I tried to stay clear of Mike so that he could keep the birdie in play, but Coach Clapp came by and ordered him to remain on his side of the court so I could participate. He stayed, watching, to enforce his words.

With a sigh, I stepped into a more central place on the court, holding my racquet upright, if still gingerly. The girl on the other team sneered maliciously as she served the birdie—I must have injured her during the basketball section—lobbing it just a few feet past the net, directly toward me. I sprung gracelessly forward, aiming my swing in the direction of the little rubber pest, but I forgot to take the net into account. My racquet bounced back from the net with surprising strength, popping out of my hand, and glancing off my forehead before whacking Mike in the shoulder as he rushed forward to get the birdie I had completely missed.

Coach Clapp coughed, or muffled a laugh.

"Sorry, Newton," he mumbled, ambling away so we could return to our former, less dangerous, positions.

"Are you okay?" Mike asked, massaging his shoulder, just as I was rubbing my forehead.

"Yeah, are you?" I asked meekly, retrieving my weapon.

"I think I'll make it." He swung his arm in a circle, making sure he still had full range of motion.

"I'll just stay back here." I walked to the back corner of the court, holding my racket carefully behind my back.