

(Notes: This section is self-gratification at its very worst. I was just having a blast being all pink-ribbons-and-bows girly with the prom thing. Enter at your own risk.)

Extended Prom Remix

"When are you going to tell me what's going on, Alice?"

"You'll see, be patient," she ordered, grinning deviously.

We were in my truck, but she was driving. Three more weeks and I'd be out of the walking cast, and then I was going to very firmly put my good foot down about the chauffeuring business. I liked driving.

It was late May, and somehow the land around Forks was finding ways to be even more green than usual. It was beautiful, of course, and I was growing somewhat reconciled with the forest, mostly on account of my spending so much more time there than usual. We weren't quite friends yet, nature and I, but we were getting closer.

The sky was gray, but that was welcome, too. It was a pearly gray, not grim at all, not raining, and almost warm enough for me. The clouds were thick and safe, the kind of clouds that had become pleasant to me, because of the freedom they guaranteed.

But despite these agreeable surroundings, I was feeling edgy. Partially because of Alice's strange behavior. She had absolutely insisted on a girl's day out this Saturday morning, driving me up to Port Angeles in order for us to get manicures and pedicures, refusing to let me have the modest shade of pink I wanted, ordering the manicurist instead to paint me up with a dark shimmering red—even going so far as to insist I get the toenails of my casted foot painted.

Then she took me go shoe shopping, though I could only try on half of each pair. Against my strenuous protests, she bought me a pair of the most impractical, overpriced stiletto heels—dangerous looking things, held on only by thick satin ribbons that crossed over my foot and tied in a wide bow behind my ankle. They were a deep, hyacinth blue, and in vain I tried to explain that I had nothing I could wear them with. Even with my closet embarrassingly full of the clothes she'd bought me in L.A.—most of them still too light to wear yet in Forks—I was positive that I had nothing in that shade. And even if I'd had that exact shade hiding somewhere in my wardrobe, my clothes weren't really suited to stiletto heels. I wasn't suited to stiletto heels—I could barely walk safely in socks. But my unassailable logic was wasted on her. She wouldn't even argue back.

"Well, they're not Biviano's, but they'll have to do," she muttered bafflingly, and then would speak no more as she unleashed her credit card on the awe-struck employees.

She got me lunch at a fast food drive through window, telling me I had to eat in the car, but refusing to explain the hurry. Moreover, on the way home I had to remind her several times that my truck was simply not capable of performing like a sports car, even with Rosalie's modifications, and to please give the poor thing a break. Usually, Alice was my preferred chauffeur. She didn't seem bothered by driving a mere twenty or thirty miles over the speed limit, the way some people just couldn't bear to do.

But Alice's obvious secret agenda was only half the problem, of course. I was also pathetically anxious because I hadn't seen Edward's face in almost six hours and that had to be a record for the last two months.

Charlie had been difficult, but not impossibly so. He was reconciled to Edward's constant presence when he returned home, finding nothing to complain about as we sat over our

homework at the kitchen table—he even seemed to enjoy Edward's company as they shouted together at the games on ESPN. But he'd lost nothing of his original sternness as he grimly held the door for Edward at precisely ten o'clock each weeknight. Of course, Charlie was completely unaware of Edward's ability to return his car home and be back through my window in less than ten minutes.

He was much more agreeable toward Alice, sometimes embarrassingly so. Obviously, until I had my bulky cast traded in for something more manageable, I was in need of a woman's help. Alice was an angel, a sister; every night and every morning she appeared to help me through my daily routines. Charlie was enormously grateful to be relieved of the horror of a nearly adult daughter who needed help showering—that kind of thing was far beyond his comfort zone, and mine, too, for that matter. But it was with more than gratitude that Charlie took to calling her "Angel" as a nickname, and watched her with bemused eyes as she danced smilingly through the little house, brightening it. No human could fail to be affected by her astounding beauty and grace, and when she glided through the door each night with an affectionate, "See you tomorrow, Charlie," she left him stunned.

"Alice, are we going home now?" I asked now, both of us understanding I meant the white house on the river.

"Yes." She grinned, knowing me well. "But Edward's not there."

I frowned. "Where is he?"

"He had some errands to run."

"Errands?" I repeated blankly. "Alice," my tone turned wheedling, "please tell me what's going on."

She shook her head, still grinning tightly. "I'm having too much fun," she explained.

When we got back to the house, Alice took me straight upstairs, to her bedroom-sized bathroom. I was surprised to find Rosalie there, waiting with a celestial smile, standing behind I low, pink chair. A mind-boggling array of tools and products covered the long counter.

"Sit," Alice commanded. I considered her carefully for a minute, and then, deciding she was prepared to use force if necessary, I limped to the chair and sat down with what dignity I could manage. Rosalie immediately began brushing through my hair.

"I don't suppose you will tell me what this is about?" I asked her.

"You can torture me," she murmured, absorbed with my hair, "but I'll never talk."

Rosalie held my head in the sink while Alice scrubbed through my hair with a shampoo that smelled like mint and grapefruit. Alice towed through the wet tangles furiously, then sprayed almost an entire bottle of something else—this one smelled like cucumbers—on the damp masses and towed me again.

They combed through the mess quickly then; whatever the cucumber stuff was, it made the tangles behave. I might want to borrow some of that. Then they each took a blow dryer and went to work.

As minutes ticked by, and they kept discovering new sections of dripping strands, their faces started to become a little worried. I smiled gleefully. Some things even vampires couldn't speed up.

"She's got an awful lot of hair," Rosalie commented in an anxious voice.

"Jasper!" Alice called clearly, though not loudly, "Find me another blow dryer!"

Jasper came to their rescue, somehow coming up with two more blow dryers, which he

pointed at my head, deeply amused, while they continued to work with their own.

"Jasper..." I began hopefully.

"Sorry, Bella. I'm not allowed to say anything."

He escaped gratefully when finally it was all dry—and poufy. My hair stood out three inches from my head.

"What have you done to me?" I asked in horror. But they ignored me, pulling out a box of hot rollers.

I tried to convince them that my hair didn't curl, but they ignored me, daubing something that was an unhealthy yellow in color through each lock before winding it around a hot curler.

"Did you find shoes?" Rosalie asked intensely while they worked, as if the answer was of vital importance.

"Yes—they're perfect," Alice purred with satisfaction.

I watched Rosalie in the mirror, nodding as if a great weight had been taken off her mind.

"Your hair looks nice," I noticed. Not that it wasn't always ideal—but she had it pulled up this afternoon, creating a crown of soft golden curls atop her perfect head.

"Thank you." She smiled. They'd started on the second set of curlers now.

"What do you think about make-up?" Alice asked.

"It's a pain," I offered. They ignored me.

"She doesn't need much—her skin is better bare," Rosalie mused.

"Lipstick, though," Alice decided.

"And mascara and eyeliner," Rosalie added, "just a little."

I sighed loudly. Alice giggled. "Be patient, Bella. We're having fun."

"Well, as long as you are," I muttered.

They had all the curlers pinned tightly and uncomfortably to my head now.

"Let's get her dressed." Alice's voice thrilled with anticipation. She didn't wait for me to hobble out of the bathroom under my own power. Instead she scooped me up and carried me to Rosalie and Emmett's big white room. On the bed, there was a dress. Hyacinth blue, of course.

"What do you think?" Alice chirped.

That was a good question. It was softly frilly, apparently meant to be worn very low and off the shoulders, with long, draping sleeves that gathered at the wrists. The sheer bodice was girdled by another, paled-flowered, hyacinth fabric, that pleated together to form a thin ruffle down the left side. The flowered material was long in the back, but open in the front over several fitted layers of soft hyacinth ruffles, lightening in shade as they reached the tea-length bottom hem.

"Alice," I wailed. "I can't wear that!"

"Why?" she demanded in a hard voice.

"The top is completely see-through!"

"This goes underneath," Rosalie held up an ominous-looking, pale blue garment.

"What is that?" I asked fearfully.

"It's a corset, silly," Alice said, impatient. "Now are you going to put it on, or do I have to call Jasper and ask him to hold you down while I do it?" she threatened.

"You're supposed to be my friend," I accused.

"Be kind Bella," she sighed, "I don't remember being human and I'm trying to have some vicarious fun here. Besides, it's for your own good."

I complained and blushed a lot, but it didn't take them long to get me in the dress. I had to admit, the corset had its advantages.

"Wow," I breathed, looking down. "I have cleavage."

"Who would have guessed," Alice chuckled, delighted with her work. I wasn't completely sold, though.

"Don't you think this dress is a little too...I don't know, fashion forward...for Forks?" I asked hesitantly.

"I think the words you're looking for are haute couture," Rosalie laughed.

"It's not for Forks, it's for Edward," Alice insisted. "It's exactly right."

They took me back to the bathroom then, unwinding the curlers with flying fingers. To my shock, cascades of curls tumbled out. Rosalie pulled most of these up, carefully twisting them into an equine mane of ringlets that flooded in a thick line down my back. While she worked, Alice quickly painted a thin black stripe around each of my eyes, brushed on mascara, and smeared dark red lipstick carefully on my lips. Then she darted out of the room and returned promptly with the shoes.

"Perfect," Rosalie breathed as Alice held them up to be admired.

Alice tied the deadly shoe on expertly, and then looked at my cast with speculation in her eyes.

"I guess we've done what we can," she shook her head sadly. "You don't suppose Carlisle would let us...?" she glanced at Rosalie.

"I doubt it," Rosalie replied dryly. Alice sighed.

They both perked their heads up then.

"He's back." I knew which 'he' they meant, and I felt vigorous butterflies in my stomach.

"He can wait. There's one more important thing," Alice said firmly. She lifted me again—a necessity, I was sure I couldn't walk in that shoe—and carried me to her room, where she gently stood me up in front of her wide, gilt edged, full length mirror.

"There," she said. "You see?"

I stared at the stranger in the mirror. She looked very tall in the high shoe, with the long, slender line of the clinging dress adding to the illusion. The décolleté bodice—where her unusually impressive bust line caught my eye again—made her neck look very long, as did the column of shining curls down her back. The hyacinth color of the fabric was perfect, bringing out the creaminess of her ivory skin, the roses in the blush on her cheeks. She was very pretty, I had to admit.

"Okay, Alice." I smiled. "I see."

"Don't forget it," she ordered.

She picked me up again, and carried me to the top of the stairs.

"Turn around and close your eyes!" she ordered down the stairs. "And stay out of my head—don't ruin it."

She hesitated, walking more slowly than usual down the staircase until she could see that he had obeyed. Then she flew the rest of the way. Edward stood by the door, his back to us, very tall and dark—I'd never seen him wear black before. Alice set me upright, smoothing the drape of my dress, tweaking a curl into place, and then she left me there, going to sit on the piano bench to watch. Rosalie followed to sit with her in the audience. "Can I look?" his voice was intense with anticipation—it made my heart throb unevenly.

"Yes...now," Alice directed.

He pivoted immediately, and then froze in place, his topaz eyes wide. I could feel the

heat creep up my neck and stain my cheeks. He was so beautiful; I felt a flicker of the old fear, that he was just a dream, not possibly real. He was wearing a tuxedo, and he belonged on a movie screen, not next to me. I stared at him in awed disbelief.

He walked slowly toward me, hesitating a foot away when he reached me.

"Alice, Rosalie...thank you," he breathed without looking away from me. I heard Alice chuckle in pleasure.

He stepped forward, cupping one cold hand under my jaw, and stooping to press his lips to my throat.

"It is you," he murmured against my skin. He pulled away, and there were white flowers in his other hand.

"Freesia," he informed me as he pinned them into my curls. "Completely redundant, as far as fragrance is concerned, of course." He leaned back, looking me over again. He smiled his heart-stopping smile. "You are absurdly beautiful."

"You took my line," I kept my voice as light as I could manage. "Just when I convince myself that you're actually real, you show up looking like this and I'm afraid I'm dreaming again."

He scooped me swiftly into his arms. He held me close to his face, his eyes burning as he pulled me even closer.

"Watch the lipstick!" Alice commanded.

He laughed rebelliously, but dropped his mouth to the hollow above my collarbone instead.

"Are you ready to go?" he asked.

"Is anyone ever going to tell me what the occasion is?"

He laughed again, glancing over his shoulder at his sisters. "She hasn't guessed?"

"No," Alice giggled. Edward laughed delightedly. I scowled.

"What am I missing?"

"Don't worry, you'll figure it out soon enough," he assured me.

"Put her down, Edward, so I can take a picture," Esme was coming down the stairs with a silver camera in her hands.

"Pictures?" I muttered, as he set me carefully on my wobbly good foot. I was getting a bad feeling about all of this. "Will you show up on film?" I asked sarcastically.

He grinned at me.

Esme took several snapshots of us, till Edward laughingly insisted we would be late.

"We'll see you there," Alice called as he carried me to the door.

"Alice will be there? Wherever there may be?" I felt a little better.

"And Jasper, and Emmett, and Rosalie."

My forehead wrinkled with concentration as I tried to deduce the secret. He snickered at my expression.

"Bella," Esme called after me, "Your father is on the phone."

"Charlie?" Edward and I asked simultaneously. Esme brought me the phone, but he snatched it as she tried to hand it to me, holding me away effortlessly with one arm.

"Hey!" I protested, but he was already talking.

"Charlie? It's me. What's wrong?" He sounded worried. My face paled. But then his expression became amused—and suddenly wicked.

"Give him the phone, Charlie—let me talk to him." Whatever was going on, Edward was enjoying himself a little too much for Charlie to be in any danger. I relaxed slightly.

"Hello, Tyler, this is Edward Cullen," his voice was very friendly, on the surface. I knew it well enough to catch the soft edge of menace. What was Tyler doing at my house? The awful truth started to dawn on me.

"I'm sorry if there's been some kind of miscommunication, but Bella is unavailable tonight." Edward's tone changed, and the threat in his voice was suddenly much more evident as he continued. "To be perfectly honest, she'll be unavailable every night, as far as anyone besides myself is concerned. No offense. And I'm sorry about your evening." He didn't sound sorry at all. And then he snapped the phone shut, a huge smirk on his face.

"You're taking me to the prom!" I accused furiously. My face and neck flushed crimson with anger. I could feel the rage-induced tears starting to fill my eyes. He wasn't expecting the force of my reaction, that was clear. He pressed his lips together and his eyes darkened.

"Don't be difficult, Bella."

"Bella, we're all going," Alice encouraged, suddenly at my shoulder.

"Why are you doing this to me?" I demanded.

"It will be fun." Alice was still brightly optimistic.

But Edward bent to murmur in my ear, his voice velvet and serious. "You're only human once, Bella. Humor me."

Then he turned the full force of his scorching golden eyes on me, melting my resistance with their warmth.

"Fine," I pouted, unable to glare as effectively as I would have liked, "I'll go quietly. But you'll see," I warned grimly, "this is the bad luck you've been worrying about. I'll probably break my other leg. Look at this shoe! It's a death trap!" I held out my good leg as evidence.

"Hmmm." He stared at my leg for a longer moment than necessary, and then looked at Alice with glowing eyes, "Again, thank you."

"You'll be late to Charlie's," Esme reminded him.

"All right, let's go," he swung me through the door.

"Is Charlie in on this?" I asked through clenched teeth.

"Of course," he grinned.

I was preoccupied, so I didn't notice at first. I was only vaguely aware of a silver car, and assumed it was the Volvo. But then he stooped so low to put me in that I thought he was setting me on the ground.

"What's this?" I asked, surprised to find myself in an unfamiliar coupe. "Where's the Volvo?"

"The Volvo is my everyday car," he told me carefully, apprehensive that I might throw another fit. "This is a special occasion car."

"What will Charlie think?" I shook my head disapprovingly as he climbed in and started the engine. It purred.

"Oh, most of the population in Forks thinks that Carlisle is an avid car collector." He sped through the woods toward the highway.

"And he's not?"

"No, that's more my hobby. Rosalie collects cars, too, but she prefers fooling around with their innards to driving them. She did a lot of work on this one for me."

I was still wondering why we were going back to Charlie's house when we pulled up in

front of it. The porch light was on, though it wasn't quite dusk yet. Charlie must be waiting, probably peeking out the windows now. I started to blush, wondering if my father's first reaction to the dress would be similar to mine. Edward strolled around the car, slowly for him, to get my door—confirming my suspicions that Charlie was watching.

Then, as Edward was lifting me carefully out of the little car, Charlie—very uncharacteristically—came out into the yard to greet us. My cheeks burned; Edward noticed and looked at me questioningly. But I needn't have worried. Charlie never even saw me.

"Is that an Aston Martin?" he asked Edward in a reverent voice.

"Yes—the Vanquish." The corners of his mouth twitched, but he controlled it.

Charlie released a low whistle.

"Do you want to give her a try?" Edward held up the key.

Charlie's eyes finally left the car. He looked at Edward in disbelief—colored by a tiny hint of hope.

"No," he said, reluctant, "What would your father say?"

"Carlisle won't mind at all," Edward said truthfully, laughing. "Go ahead." He pressed the key into Charlie's willing hand.

"Well, just a quick spin..." Charlie was already caressing the fender with one hand.

Edward helped me hobble to the front door, scooping me up as soon as we were inside, and carrying me to the kitchen.

"That worked out well," I said. "He didn't have a chance to freak out over the dress."

Edward blinked. "I didn't think of that," he admitted. His eyes raked over my dress again with a critical expression. "I guess it's a good thing we didn't take the truck, classic or not."

I looked unwillingly away from his face long enough to notice that the kitchen was unusually dim. There were candles on the table, lots of them, maybe twenty or thirty tall, white candles. The old table was disguised by a long, white cloth, as were two chairs.

"Is this what you were working on today?"

"No—this only took half a second. It was the food that took all day. I know how you find fancy restaurants overpowering, not that there are many choices that fall into that category around here, but I decided you couldn't complain about your own kitchen."

He sat me in one of the white swathed chairs, and began assembling things out of the oven and fridge. I noticed there was only one place setting.

"Aren't you going to feed Charlie, too? He's bound to come home eventually."

"Charlie couldn't eat another bite—who do you think was my taster? I had to be sure this all was edible." He put a plate down in front of me, full of things that looked very edible. I sighed.

"Are you still mad?" He pulled the other chair around the table so he could sit next to me.

"No. Well, yes, but not at this very moment. I was just thinking—there it goes, the one thing I could do better than you. This looks great." I sighed again.

He chuckled. "You haven't tried it yet—be optimistic, maybe it's awful."

I took a bite, paused, and then made a face.

"Is it awful?" he asked, shocked.

"No, it's fabulous, naturally."

"That's a relief," he smiled, so beautiful. "Don't be concerned, there's still lots of things

you're better at."

"Name even one."

He didn't answer at first, he just lightly ran his cool finger along the line of my collarbone, holding my gaze with smoldering eyes until I felt my skin burn and redden.

"There's that," he murmured, touching the crimson in my cheek. "I've never seen anyone blush as well as you do."

"Wonderful," I scowled. "Involuntary reactions—something I can be proud of."

"You're also the bravest person I know."

"Brave?" I scoffed.

"You spend all your spare time in the company of vampires; that takes some nerve. And you don't hesitate to put yourself in hazardous proximity with my teeth..."

I shook my head. "I knew you couldn't come up with anything."

He laughed. "I'm serious, you know. But never mind. Eat." He took my fork from me, impatient, and began feeding me. The food was all perfect, of course.

Charlie came home when I was almost finished. I watched his face carefully, but my luck was holding, he was too dazzled by the car to notice how I was dressed. He handed the keys back to Edward.

"Thanks, Edward," he smiled dreamily. "That's some car."

"You're welcome."

"How did it all turn out?" Charlie looked at my empty plate.

"Perfect." I sighed.

"You know, Bella, you might let him practice cooking for us again sometime," he hinted. I gave Edward a dark look. "I'm sure he will, Dad."

It wasn't till we were headed out that door that Charlie completely woke up. Edward had his arm around my waist, for balance and support, while I hobbled along in the unstable shoe.

"Um, you look...very grown up, Bella." I could hear the beginnings of fatherly disapproval brewing.

"Alice dressed me up. I didn't get much say in anything."

Edward laughed so low only I could hear.

"Well, if Alice..." he trailed off, somewhat mollified. "You do look pretty, Bells." He paused, a sly gleam in his eyes. "So, should I be expecting any more young men in tuxedos showing up here tonight?"

I groaned and Edward snickered. How anyone could be as oblivious as Tyler, I couldn't fathom. It wasn't as if Edward and I had been exactly secretive at school. We came and left together, he half carried me to all of my classes, I sat with him and his family everyday at lunch, and he wasn't shy about kissing me in front of witnesses, either. Tyler clearly needed professional help.

"I hope so," Edward grinned at my dad. "There's a refrigerator full of leftovers—tell them to help themselves."

"I don't think so—those are mine," Charlie muttered.

"Take names for me, Charlie," the trace of menace in his voice was probably only audible to me.

"Oh, enough!" I ordered.

Thankfully, we finally made it into the car and away.