



# Forget Me Knots

## GothicTempress

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# Summary

In the complex composition of the fibers forming the rope of life, some knots are erotic & fulfilling while others are disconcertingly merciless. Many unravel, but vestiges often remain as evidence of distressful wounds too wretched to heal. Pity.

# Chapter 1

**This is the extended version of my contest entry for the 2011 The Season of Our Discontent contest.** I selected Picture Prompt Number #10 as my inspiration. (Found on my Author's page - A rain drenched, open window with a rope hanging from the window sill).

**Warnings and Disclaimer:** The story is rated a strong M due to extremely dark and edge play/erotic themes which will include angst, suspense, horror, romance, consensual suspension bondage, rope play (shinju, sukaranbo, karada), bukkake, erotic breath play and ... well ... *not so much*.

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**Anywhere USA, many years ago ...**

Alice observed from the attic window as the children played in the park across the street, disgusted at the unusually advanced dexterity the boy had with his hands as she watched him manipulate his ropes between the swing-set bars.

She recognized him instantly. She'd see him ride his bike up and down her street every morning since their arrival a month ago, his loyal dog trotting behind his spinning wheel spokes as he sped past, his devious smile revealing his white teeth in the dawning sunlight.

Alice hated him. He'd given her the creeps since the first time she saw him, and she was never wrong about reading others accurately.

She watched as his friends grouped around him in awe, his loops and quick movements morphing into a usable, perfectly functioning hammock. The boy sat on it and tested it first, and was soon joined by his friends as they swung happily in the bright, summer sunshine. Their raucous laughter echoed off of the bland, cookie-cutter homes surrounding the park, augmenting the discord of the neighborhood.

Alice shook her head in loathing. There were posters stapled to every street lamp up and down this block that warned inhabitants of little Jessica Stanley's recent disappearance. It was a dangerous time to allow young children to play without vigilant adult supervision and as Alice glanced over the tableau of the parkscape,

she frowned. Not one adult was found to be nearby, yet the community was supposed to be on a heightened state of alert. The boys were no older than she was, yet she was never allowed to leave her home anymore. She felt it was unfair that the sinister little menace and his jovial friends were free to roam where she could not.

"Alice, come away from the window. Get used to the fact that you're not leaving this house again. It will do you no good to dwell on what can't be changed."

The sound of her mother's voice seemed opaque compared to its usual timbre, adding further weight to her brooding. Nothing made sense anymore and everything seemed so unfair.

Alice acquiesced, pulling away from the dusty window, her frown culling down the sides of her mouth as the burden in her heart grew more abundant by the second.

There was nothing she could do. She wished there was something. *Anything.*

She followed her mother down the stairs, descending once again into her dreaded prison.

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"Where is Mrs. Brandon? I saw her and her daughter at the store two days ago buying ingredients for her famous oatmeal cookies. She said she'd be here at three to set up for the reception after the badge ceremony."

Mr. Newton's voice strained with concern as he addressed his wife. In all of his years as a Scoutmaster, he'd always been able to rely on Mrs. Brandon's promptness. She had been his most reliable den mother, exceptionally generous with her volunteer work with his troop's needs, as well as in their community at large.

Her uncharacteristic tardiness concerned him. He hoped she would arrive soon because they were woefully lacking in desserts for the celebratory festivities. His Boy Scouts were notoriously rabid when it came to desserts, especially Mrs. Brandon's oatmeal cookies, and so was he. They were his particular favorite.

He tried to silence his rumbling stomach and gathered his bag full of award badges, walking to the front of the room. Those gathered quickly silenced their conversations to listen to his greeting.

"As your Scout Leader, I'd like to welcome you all to this very special milestone in a Boy Scout's life. This is the day that many of you have worked so hard for. Troop 107, please join me at the podium."

Proud parents, siblings and neighbors applauded wildly as the boys filed to the front.

One boy smiled wider than the rest, for today he would be receiving a special award for his proficiency in knots. It was the most important award he had received in his short life, and he enjoyed accolades and being the best most of all.

His smile grew wider as his daydreaming slipped him towards a more stimulating place, emotionally suffocating the boring speech regarding the inconsequential achievements of the others with his infernal desires.

As he quietly chuckled to himself at his unbound thoughts, he reluctantly brought himself back to the present. He noticed the beaming happiness on the faces of his younger brother and parents, their proud smiles radiating to their eyes. He winked at his mother to appease her curious expression and waited for his moment in the spotlight.

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The sound of the disintegrating wood scraping against the rotting window casing violently ground against the damp night air, sending wayward paint chips and raindrops into the bushes beneath it.

Dingy white flecks littered the saturated green foliage below, the only hints of entry or exit as he lifted his lithe body up onto the stool of the window pane, maneuvering himself easily inside the opening of the rain drenched sill.

His gloved hands reached for the light switch in the small bedroom, the sound of the fabric of his sweater sliding against the darkness as he flipped it up.

He came to look at them one last time, curious to see what one day in this climate would do to them.

His past experience led him to bring his mother's red checkered dishtowel to cover his nose, just in case. But he was disappointed that there was no need for that towel. *Yet.*

"Do you understand what happens when you constantly yell about your newspaper landing in your bushes instead of on your front stoop? You threatened to tie up Twilight, my dog and best friend. I tied *you* up instead. And I'm not sorry about your daughter. I didn't like the way she looked at me."

His voice audibly crackled within his maturing vocal cords as he spoke to the bound, motionless figures on the bed.

He moved closer to observe the perfectly executed artistry exhibited on his beloved ropes, textbook knots that embodied the sample images of those found in the Boy Scout Handbook. He would have taken his ropes back, if he could, but he figured that the fibers had earned their peaceful state. They belonged to and would rest with others now.

*His generous gift.*

His smile solidified this conclusion, oblivious to the whispered conversation occurring in the other corner of the room.

"Mom, why did you have to yell at him so many times?"

Mrs. Brandon shook her head silently in response. Leave it to her eleven year old daughter to blame her for the actions of this psychopath. An eternity with a sissyish eleven year old suddenly sounded like hell.

She fervently hoped that spirits could mature.

The mother and daughter hovered in the doorway, watching the boy smile down on what they once were. He could not hear them, nor would he care if he could.

"He's looking at us like he's ... hungry."

Alice's voice was suddenly filled with terror and her mother bristled with the revulsion that her daughter was correct.

Mrs Brandon lunged for the large brass lamp on the dresser in front of them, but nothing remained physically tangible, air only existing where a viable bludgeoning weapon might have been. She would have gladly smashed his skull in if she were able to. The sick little shit needed to die, and painfully if she had anything to do with it.

Her dejected sigh held so many meanings ... the fact that all attempts were

useless, most of all.

He straightened his spine when he suddenly smelled something wafting from another room. He walked through them and into the kitchen, where he noticed trays and trays of oatmeal cookies littering the counter and table, crumbs evident where they had sampled some for themselves.

He had not investigated the other rooms when he visited last, too strung out on the adrenaline following the success of his hunt.

The corners of his lips encroached towards his jaw, the cloying sweetness disgusting him. He hated oatmeal *anything*. Sampling what was in the other room might have been another matter, but they were already too old, and he'd learned that humans *were* what they ate, remnants of their diet manifesting in some not-so-subtle ways. He wasn't about to ruin a perfectly fine entree with oats. Even he had his own limits.

He jumped when he heard a car pull into the driveway at the front of the house. He assumed it was the Scout Master searching for Mrs. Brandon and his favorite cookies. The boy had seen Mr. Newton's car parked in Mrs. Brandon's driveway many times. His Scout Master would leave early, before the rest of the neighborhood rose for their day, but nothing escaped the newspaper boy, this master of knots.

"Mom, try to get Mr. Newton's attention. Let's try to do anything to open the door!"

Her mother shook her head slowly in response.

"Get used to the fact that we're not leaving this house again. It will do you no good to dwell on what can't be changed."

An edge of resolution was detectable over the despondency she felt when she first began speaking to her daughter. Mrs. Brandon knew that they were totally fucked, captives in this small space for the rest of eternity. And she was trapped while she had to listen to her now weeping daughter.

She'd always known she'd never been a very good Catholic, but was this what she deserved, her purgatory for her multitude of earthly transgressions? Her sigh reflected the dreadful truth of their situation.

And as they heard the front door knob rattle from the outside, they knew that the

gruesome discovery would be unearthed in short order if Mr. Newton walked around to the back of the house.

The menace had already climbed back through the same window of the room of their resting place from which he came, slinking into the melanoid darkness that had become their perpetual night.

They turned and floated after the retreating boy when they heard the window close, shutting them into their prison once again. When they got to the hallway, they paused. Neither wanted to confront the horrific matter.

Mrs. Brandon's disturbing snark cut through their even more ominous reality.

"How thoughtful. He left the light on for us."

She chuckled to herself when she realized that she was more saucy dead than she ever had been when she was alive. She sensed that there was something about death that liberated inhibition and annihilated her life-long filter. *There* was a silver lining.

"I can hear Mr. Newton's footsteps on the side patio now. I'm not sure he'll be able to survive ... the discovery, the shock ... "

She stopped speaking before she explained too much to her innocent daughter. Mr. Newton may have been a Scout Master, but he hadn't been a master of anything else, especially in her bed. The disappointing fact was that he could hardly move or break a sweat without an asthmatic response. It was no wonder his wife's rejections inspired his late night visits. Yet a widow had to get some from somewhere.

Mr. Newton was a good enough man in other areas of his life, so those were the redeeming qualities that she'd continued to focus on.

Mrs. Brandon frowned at another burgeoning thought. He would probably suffer a fatal heart attack at the pending morbid discovery, and then he would be forever haunting the space outside their window, another notch in her upsetting tragedy as he remained just beyond her reach. She never had any luck.

The ghosts widened their eyes when they heard banging on the window in question, the brittle glass straining with the force of Mr. Newton's panicked fists. They floated into the doorway, where they realized they could barely make out his profile as he inched closer to the cracking glass that was barring them from the living, his screams and gasps for breath barely audible between the barrier

intervening the living world and their own. They could see his outline clutching his chest and his large head crashing through the vitreous portal of the dead as he collapsed beneath his own dramatic demise.

"Thought so."

At least Mrs. Brandon was able to gain some certainty out of the horrendous situation, and a bit of luck too. *All things considered.*

Seconds passed after his stillness recalibrated the weighted scales of fate, and soon a fluttering of barely discernible energy began displacing the air outside the broken shards.

When Mr. Newton miraculously floated in through the jagged opening in the small, shattered glass pane, Mrs. Brandon smiled. Things were suddenly looking up. Their eternity would now include another soul that would break up their probable monotony.

*She hoped.*

When he righted himself in the air, he looked in bewilderment at his lifeless, bloody human form piercing the window of the house. He slowly turned his body counter clockwise to look at the lifeless bodies that remained motionless on the bed. He shook his head in disbelief and cautiously turned his head further when he noticed movement near the door.

His jaw dropped in disbelief at seeing the two spirits floating before him, Mrs. Brandon attempting a smile, trying to make the most of their confounding, supernatural reality.

Her voice lilted higher, trying desperately to lighten the mood.

"Surprise!"

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**New York City, May, 2012**

Edward's searching was steadfast, his silent, carnal desires to find her constantly stunted by that fact that a large metropolis made it very difficult to run into the

same people twice. *Especially when you wanted to most.*

But he had a critical clue about her that happened to be a talisman empowering his cause.

He could never forget her ankles and wrists or the patterned red marks he understood all too well, for they called to him like a siren's song.

He just had to find out where she went to acquire them ... where she went to satiate her kink.

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Despite the shocking color of the red door at the back of the alley, seasoned New Yorkers walked past in their unaffected manner, oblivious or not caring what lay behind it.

Edward strode towards it, noticing the music ascending louder with each step closer. He had only been in New York for two months, yet he had managed to fall into acquaintances with knowledgeable people, who provided eager invitations to the right places and private events.

"You'll probably find her behind the blood door we call Big Red. The password is Shibari."

*That* is what they told him. Little did they know how fluently they were speaking his cherished language of pleasure.

One corner of his mouth slid up when he saw the large BDSM emblem on the front of the door, the symbol he knew so well and sought out often. His satisfied smirk created a path of wicked knowing. *That* had been the symbol he'd been looking for, the black circle he loved to see, the emblem that reassured all who dared to enter that open minded and erotically intrepid revelers existed within. The black represented their darkest sexual desires, surrounded by the metallic silver border, reminding all of the servitude, chains and metal restraints that raised his pulse with a single thought. There was the waving variation of the yin yang sign split instead into three, reminding all who entered of the whips that swung in the air; three sections a promise of the variations. Bottom. Top. Switch.

*This* was the kind of place that re-energized the allotment of his psyche that had

to share space with the other parts of his mind that submitted to his life goose stepping with the day walkers, the vanilla consuming worker bees and consummate conformists. Behind the door, he hoped to find his target.

*Pleasure. Pain. Rope Burn. Knots. Release.*

He hoped to find the brunette with the evidence that had been calling to him ever since he watched her red-marred legs stride up Sixth Avenue towards Tribeca, her rope-burned wrists and ankles beckoning him to find and take her. She hadn't even tried to mask them, instead choosing to broadcast them unabashedly.

And then he had lost her in the crowd.

The door was opened by a huge man who was guarding the interior entrance behind Big Red, waiting patiently for Edward's voice.

"Shibari."

The large man allowed the inner door to swing open and Edward moved in with excitement fueling his heels, propelling him towards the crowded dance floor.

There, suspended from the soaring ceiling of this enclave of perfect depravity, hung his goddess. She hovered high above the pulsing crowd. Her corseted breasts and waist angled perpendicular to the floor, knees bent as they held the back of her black vinyl skirt captive. The ankles of her combat boots were knotted to her wrists, her pony tail bound in a knot attached to her spine, her head pulled back and her mouth filled with a vermilion ball gag as inviting to him as Big Red.

Edward's tongue wanted in, and so did his fingers, tongue and throbbing cock.

He moved carefully through the crowd to get a better view, discovering that the second level overlooking the massive space below would allow him to stand in eye-view of her. She was clearly in a heightened state of excitement because she was moaning, her teeth barring around the shiny gag, her lips quivering in a smile. Her chest was heaving in a cadence he'd seen rarely in others, yet knew well. She seemed to enjoy the restraints and tension as much as he enjoyed inflicting them on others.

She didn't care about the dancers and spectators beneath her. Hovering in her erotic trance, there was only the pleasure of self. There was only *one*.

She sensed something altering amidst the teeming heartbeats, reverberating her

energized bliss. It was a tangible beckoning to slit her eyes and look despite her normal hesitance to witness the attention she knew she was receiving. Even though she was on display, she participated for herself alone, not for the needs of anyone else.

Yet now she felt compelled to really *look*.

Her slits broadened so she could open her eyes to really see what was calling to her, and she suddenly knew in that unexpected moment that she would belong to another.

She stared at the gorgeous man that held her gaze with an intensity she was unaccustomed to ever seeing directed at her. She'd always practiced self-bondage because her previous partners were never interested to the degree she wanted. *Needed*.

She spent years experimenting in her private moments, pushing herself further until she discovered the exhibitionist that lurked within.

The rope was her favorite mechanism of pleasure, especially combined with a restrictive leather corset pressing over the biting fibers crossing her breasts, ribs, and between her legs. The sensual circuit of restricting, scouring bliss continued up her spine to tease the laces of her corset as the end of the rope meet it's mate at the base of her neck in an intricate array of seductive secrets.

Edward's eyes held her as she began to quiver within her restraints; the foreign, possible reality of sharing her erotic secrets with this stranger a spike within her racing mind. She was suddenly losing her means to reconcile her solitary desires for her unexpected, desperate need to have him at her helm.

Her eyes widened further when his moist tongue beckoned her attention, slowly tracing his plump upper lip, his grin broadening with brightness and promises and wickedness, his bold stance solidifying his undaunted intentions as he cyphered her purpose for solitary *anything*.

Her body acted in mutiny against the control she had perfected over time. She thought she'd mastered her responses to the pain and pleasure that the position afforded her, to the eroticism of her exhibiting herself tightly bound, suspended helplessly, yet he was breaking her with his gloriously penetrating eyes and glistening tongue. She suddenly wanted him everywhere, his tongue licking her apart, his skin splitting against hers, flint against his rock hard cock as she smoldered and smothered into oblivion, disappearing within this stranger's will.

Her panting increased as she watched his long fingers reach into his pocket. When he pulled out a small rope looped into the familiar wrist restraints she loved so well, she began to pant.

When he extended them towards her in a silent offering, she did what she'd never done before in this place, in front of so many.

She came.

He smiled knowingly, licking his lips again as she arched her back further into her binds, her shoulders rolling back deeper into her spine, her legs convulsing along with the vibrations deep within her womb as her arching tilted the ropes, swiveling her mid-air. He wanted to taste her. He wanted her release to cover his lips, fingers, and seeping cock. He wanted to cover her ropes and fill the indentions that the knots created against her flesh with his come, pools of pleasure filling that of his own doing. He wanted everything she had to give.

He wanted to *take*.

She nodded and his smile became impossibly wide, his white teeth nearly blinding her in the swirling, hyper-active club lights.

She made a sudden movement with her head and a man near the ropes gathered at the back of the club began turning a large wheel, lowering her slowly towards the dance floor as revelers parted for her trembling body.

She never removed her eyes from Edward's, never breaking their connection that had been established despite her contorted position in the air.

She lowered her head slowly as she watched him run down the stairs to the main level she was now approaching.

She was still trembling when a tall woman came over to slowly tug away the loops and undue the complicated knots and rings that bound her wrists to her ankles, a moan escaping her parched throat as the tension slowly abated, her muscles and joints screaming, a winced rebellion against their acute freedom.

Edward advanced quickly, wasting no time in trying to approach her. The tall woman unfastening the harnesses and knots held her palm out, stopping him from getting any closer.

"No touching. Spectators only."

His goddess still hung by the wires attached to the rings on her corset, and the ropes were still restraining her arms to her spine at the waist, yet she moved her chin to the side of her shoulder as she shook her head in disagreement, the ball gag falling free as she flexed her jaw.

"No, it's ok, I'm ..."

She paused and flexed her neck up to look mindfully into his eyes, which were unmoving from her own.

"I'm *his*, Janey."

Jane was suddenly perplexed. She had known this particular patron for at least two years, and she was always a solitary, never mingling with the others and always staying within herself. She'd always been a self-bondage practitioner, and had only recently allowed herself to branch out to test her exhibitionist curiosities.

"Bella, are you certain?"

Jane's eyebrows met the center of her forehead, creases of concern riddling her brow as she looked at the woman she thought she knew well enough to question.

"Bella."

His voice repeating her name was heavy with certainty and tangible lust, and Jane's worry lines deepened.

Bella didn't comprehend why she'd said she was *his*, but she'd meant it with every fiber of her being. He seemed to welcome her admission readily, reaching up with his long, scorching fingers to slip the tip of one beneath the loosening rope encasing her forearm.

She quivered beneath the ministrations of his burning fingertip against her aching skin. Bella nodded vehemently to quell any further questions.

His gaze was unwavering and brazen, soundlessly forging undeniable promises.

"She *is*."

His voice was certain, his resolve lead-heavy and steadfast, providing death to any burgeoning reservations that may have entered Bella's mind. He removed the remaining restraints more adeptly than Janey ever could. He twisted, re-maneuvered

and unlatched the complicated knots at almost an in-human speed, and Janey's concerned facial expression altered her eyebrows upwards in covetous surprise and awe.

"Ohhh, we have an expert rigger here, Bella. Lucky bitch."

Bella chuckled and then moaned as Edward reached beneath the loops extending down her arms until they were loosened, his fingers and palm pushing against the indentations on her right wrist, freeing one arm from its captive. Janey had never seen such fluidity with ropes before, and wondered if the fuck hot Shibari Sensei now holding onto Bella made house calls.

Bella's mind was still reeling as the ropes came undone. Janey had no idea that she'd never met this man before this moment.

That she didn't even know his name.

When her other wrist was freed, he leaned in to whisper instructions into her hair.

"Stretch your arms out slowly to get the blood moving and wrap them around my neck. She'll unhook your corset and then I've got you."

Bella's response was nearly drowned out by the loud music surrounding them on the dance floor.

"Got me."

Her whisper tickled his exposed neck, and she felt his strong, broad chest quiver beneath the black cashmere V-neck he was wearing. He turned into her neck to lick the shell of her ear, his words as sure as they could ever be.

"I do. And with just meeting you, I'm pretty certain that I'm never letting you go."

Her heart fluttered because she believed him and was glad.

Edward gripped her tighter against him, his right palm tracing up the laces of her corset, molding and playing peek a boo with the subtle tract of her spine. His fingers twitched the moment he discovered the rise and falls of the ropes beneath her leather casing, her knots creating little bumps not visible to the naked eye.

They were secrets burning up his finger-tips.

He brought her earlobe between his teeth as he inched closer to her skin, his voice dropping lower.

"Restriction *and* the bite of the rope? I'd say you were formed just for me. There is so much I can't wait to *do* to you ... "

The last latch was released and she was firmly in his arms, nodding in excitement and knowing he meant exactly what he said.

Bella's lips traced the sharp angle of his jaw as they made a moist path towards his ear.

"Why doesn't that surprise me? You made me come once already and I don't even know your name."

The vibrations of his laughter reverberated through her sore and strained muscles, echoing through her corset and into her own chest. He used his left arm to cradle her closer to his chest as he carried her away from the dance floor. Another patron was about to be roped in and suspended above the crowd, and Bella wanted nothing more than to go somewhere quieter with him. Somewhere they could talk ... Or *whatever*.

She pointed to the same stairs that he'd descended to meet her only moments before, and he willingly obliged. He noticed a large seating area across from where he stood watching her, and he hoped that it was vacant now. He was certain that her muscles would appreciate the opportunity to stretch out.

So would he.

When Edward reached the more secluded of the seating areas, he kept her close to his heart and he sat down, the back of Bella's aching thighs resting on the top of Edward's own. Despite her tenderness, she leaned into his chest further and angled one knee over his thigh to rest against the seat beneath them. Her other leg twisting into his thigh, her bony knee digging into his own thigh until it met the seat as well.

"Edward ... "

She smiled at the sound of his voice saying his own name and leaned into his neck, his head tilting back in offering. Her lips took the bait, open mouthed and hungry.

His hands spread across the short vinyl skirt that was slowly riding up her legs, the smooth surface slipping along to expose the place he was dying to touch. Her

legs spread farther apart and he groaned when he reached the base of her corset, tracing the knots and hidden ropes descending along her spine. He moaned as her hands worked down his chest, pinching his nipples through the soft cashmere under her palms.

" ... Cullen. Edward Cullen."

She smiled wider as he stuttered and then repeated himself, shaking her head in disagreement. One eyebrow quirked up curiously on his gorgeous face.

"I think your name really is Edward I'mgonnamakeyoucomeagain."

His grin grew and she brought her lips to the corner of his, her tongue teasing his upper lip until their tongues began to push into the heat that was emanating from the passion building, her hips beginning to mimic the movement of the rolls of her tongue.

He gasped when his palms dragged lower.

"Does your rope go around or *in*?"

She blushed, pausing before she answered.

"I ... I tried many times to get the rope to lay just right on my clit but I don't think I'm doing it right because it hurts after a short while, even though I see others wear their ropes that way all night. I ..."

He traced the rope that he could feel descending along the flesh of her ass, on either side of her labia, sensuously cradling the juncture between her legs. He left one hand at the bottom of her cheeks, allowing his palm to rest against where the juncture narrowed.

He reached around her hip with his other hand and pushed forward, tracing the ropes along the front of her until he felt where the thin ropes rested on each side of her slit.

"Look at how wet your come has made them already. I've ..."

He slid a finger between the ropes, spreading her slit open, teasing her swelling bud with his fingertip.

"I've got the best knot for right here."

He pressed into the flourishing flesh and she moaned louder.

"The fibers and the bite of the hemp is going to hit you just right, torture you in the most delicious way, and your come is going to soak through it so many times that it will disintegrate the strength of the rope with the saturation of your releases. That rope is not gonna survive your flooding heat, Bella. You're gonna snap it with your own pleasure and I'll be there to feast, to ... *gorge*."

Her breathing increased with every one of his words because his meaning was obviously heavy with the knowledge she'd always wanted in a lover. She never even knew *that* was possible. She grew wetter at the idea of the strong fibers weakening because of her body's release and his desire to feed on *her*. The handicraft of creating the knots and the steadfast fibers of the rope always created a sense of lust when finally biting into her skin because they were something she could count on to remain where she needed them to satiate her own needs. But there was a new sense of power in knowing that the same passion could weaken those same threads.

She moaned in response to his salacious promises and he slipped two fingers into her dripping heat, pushing them into the place that was begging for more.

"More."

"Another?"

He slipped in another finger and she reached between them with her right hand and grabbed at his considerable length, pulling at him over the fabric of his slacks. She wasn't the kind of woman who normally slept with strangers, but there was an inexplicable yearning she knew he would fill, and was emboldened by her lustful audaciousness. She didn't care that they were in a public place. In fact, it excited her even more and that shocked her - just not enough to stop.

"I ... haven't been with anyone in over a year and I need this more than I realized. I ... haven't felt someone else's come in so long and I need to feel yours seeping out of me, over me, everywhere ... "

He moaned into her expressed desires, lighting her up with his pumping fingers and vibrating mewls, sending her skin into a maelstrom with his lips and nipping teeth.

"Here? Right here? Now? I'm not sure I want to share you and I think if we start getting more attention, there might be more participants and *come* than you're bargaining for."

Group sex was never her thing and she was glad he mentioned that possibility, as she wasn't thinking beyond her lust filled fog. She hadn't considered the consequences of her wantonness. She also wasn't one for having unprotected, penetrative sex with strangers. But tonight changed everything. On that, there would be no compromise.

Bella shook her head, her heat saturating the shell of his ear.

"Only yours. As much as you can. In me ... in my hair and my mouth ... over my breasts... over and over and overrrr ..."

Edward pulled his wet fingers out of her heat as her words caused his cock to become impossibly harder.

He kept her legs spread and reached along her ankles to secure them behind his back, standing quickly to carry her down the stairs and out of the door, Big Red slamming his good byes as Edward hailed a cab.

Edward opened the rear passenger door and kneeled forward on the seat, Bella's body falling back, his face landing onto the leather covering her breasts.

"101 West 12th Street!"

His muffled instructions to the driver were as hurried as his descent down her body, his tongue tasting the butter-soft leather along the corset masking her ribs. New York Cab drivers were used to anything, so Edward didn't hesitate to get a taste before her come was mingled and diluted with his own.

Her legs opened wider and her right foot flew up to give him even more, the sound of her combat boot smashing against the plexiglass barrier between the driver and their steamy back seat while her other collided with the rear window.

Edward's tongue was eager as it slid into place and out again, tracing the saturated fibers of the rope with his taste buds and then spiking into her once again. She was as delicious as he imagined her to be. He wanted more of her on his face.

*Welcome to McCum Sluts, the home of the famous special sauce. May I take your order?*

He chuckled at the thought, and greedily swallowed when she began releasing into his feverish licks, a small amount pooling behind his bottom lip and teeth. He always grew hard at the thought of a woman's come over his face and he was

officially addicted to hers. He would never get enough.

He wiped his wet lips, chin and jaw against her inner thigh and pushed up her body to attack her mouth with his.

Bella reached between them and ripped off the top button of his slacks, her desire to pull him out so great that she hadn't realized that the cab had stopped in front of a building, a door man leering into the window, waiting to assist the occupants.

Edward threw a hundred dollar bill into the small cash slot of the plexiglass and reached with his strong arms around her waist to secure her hips.

The door opened behind Edward and he backed out with Bella a vise around his body.

"Mr. Cullen, welcome home."

Edward grinned at the doorman who had been keeping the main entrance way ajar, until he sprinted ahead of them to summon the elevator. When the elevator doors opened, Edward stepped in with his quivering cargo, her drenched pussy saturating the front of his slacks. The doorman punched the top floor and stood back to allow the doors to close, encasing the couple in silent privacy for the first time.

Edward pushed her back against the wood paneling as he ground into her, her moans growing louder, her legs trying to spread as far apart as they could possibly go.

"Prepare to be my captive, Bella. Leaving is no longer an option."

Her moans escalated along with her want. She didn't care if he kept her forever just as long as she could feel *him* over and over again.

Their ears popped as they neared their destination, and when the doors opened he carried her to his door. Two units occupied the top floor. His was the largest.

He entered a code into a keypad without looking and the door swung open, the lovers quickly entering. She traveled backwards as he walked in a direction down a dark hallway, his loud footfalls on slate changing over to soft thuds on carpeting.

Bella's back hit the soft mattress and her senses heightened when he deftly undid the buckles at the front of her corset, exposing her skin and ropes as the latches released, the large rings on the leather jingling against the rousing melody of their

breathy pants. The obscured rope that was revealed circled her breasts and knotted along her abdomen around her rib cage, and went down to where their bodies begged to meet.

His mouth enveloped a salty nipple, ingesting her sweat as well as her moans as she reached between them and dragged his zipper down, pulling his heavy, rock-hard cock free.

Edward lightly brought her nipple between his teeth as he slammed into her, sliding easily to the hilt.

"More Edward!"

Her plea echoed off of his bedroom walls, pushing him forward like a battering ram into her willing body.

His left thumb pushed hard on her clit while his right palm flatted against her breast bone, inching slowly till it stopped over her neck. He got even harder as he traced the ropes and knots as he went.

"Take it! Take ... "

Her hips met his thrusts as she began tightening around him, dragging him even deeper.

" ... Take my breath!"

He smiled into her breast as her nipple filled his mouth. He was thrilled that she was a gasper, another compatibility, because he certainly enjoyed the process of *taking* and the power it gave him over another. His thumb and forefinger pressed along her Carotid arteries as he placed just the right amount of pressure onto the sides of her neck, her screams of release melting into her fading edges as her vision flanged to a narrow tunnel of stars and fading sounds, silky strands of darkness enveloping her.

Edward came moaning into her ear, bringing her back from the black sea she was happily swimming in.

She blinked her eyes until the colored lights ushered in her vision, and she drew a few deep breaths to fill her deprived lungs, her body seeping with his viscous lust. It was uncharacteristic for her to be this trusting of a stranger to perform breath play, and yet she had no hesitation with Edward. Her caution unraveled along with the

knots of her ropes being manipulated by the fuckhot man's magic fingers.

"Can we do that again?"

Her voice was raspy gasps penetrating the haze surrounding them, and Edward withdrew his spent length from her while he trailed his tongue over to her other nipple.

She gasped when his hands slid more persistently between their sweating bodies, his fingertips slipping underneath the prickly fibers along her ribs, just beneath her breasts. When his fingers delved beneath the knot at the base of her sternum, she hissed and winced slightly.

He left her nipple and looked up at her glowing face.

"Your skin is screaming like you want to, I'd bet."

She chuckled along with him, her teeth reflecting the moonlight. Her skin was livid, the remaining indentations wandering into her sinew as they rejoiced in the exposed air.

"I like the discomfort. It's only pain until it no longer phases me."

Edward thought it was impossible for this woman to become any more perfect, yet she surprised him at every turn. One side of his smile bore higher into his cheek as the hot pad of his finger pressed down suddenly into the red indentation the knot made in her perfect skin, her breathing growing wilder as he deliberately traced her inflamed flesh, adding a whetted edge to the pain he was intentionally inflicting on her sore spot.

Bella tilted her pelvis up to meet his hardening length, inviting him into her again ... inviting him in for as long as he wanted. He was in no rush. He would continue to take in every way he could, *while* he could.

They broke through dawn before they finally cambered towards sleep.

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**New York City, July, 2012**

Edward left the headquarters in the financial district and walked up Wall Street to his favorite restaurant, a little Italian place that served some of the best Italian cuisine on the planet.

He spotted his uncle quickly. Uncle Carlisle made hundreds of millions of dollars developing and perfecting rope strength used in the Maritime industry, patenting and profiting off of ingenious technology that resulted in a light weight rope that reduced friction and rope fiber strength failure. Every tug boat, barge, and virtually every vessel worldwide now utilized some form of his inventions, feeding his vast bank account and ego.

His uncle spent his time sailing around the world on his mega yacht and spending the money he could never run out of in a thousand lifetimes. He wore his Riviera tan well.

Edward reached to pat his shoulder as he sat down next to his uncle.

"Edward, you're too pale. No respectable sailor should be away from the sun."

Edward laughed in response, knowing exactly what his uncle meant. Edward spent every summer sailing the world with his uncle, all the while perfecting his sailing competency through priceless, first-hand knowledge that benefited him in so many ways.

"You know I miss it, but I like it here too, Carlisle. I know we've discussed it before but I'd like to make my own way. At least *try* ... "

Carlisle shook his head, effectively silencing his only living relative. The cultivation of intolerance came effortless to Carlisle Cullen when it involved his best interests, especially when others didn't agree with his perspective or order of things. Manipulation was a second nature and he despised weakness. His nephew was the only person he carried any type of affection for, and even that was growing thin. It suited Carlisle far more if his nephew would learn the ropes of his lucrative business.

Carlisle chuckled and took a sip of his Merlot, knowing exactly how well his nephew knew ropes already. The young man was a natural.

"Edward, do you have any idea how ridiculous you're being? You're the only one I would ever trust my legacy to. You *do* realize that you will be the one to inherit everything, don't you? Don't think for one moment that I'll be happy with you slaving away at a thankless job when I can literally hand you a perfect life on a silver

platter. Fuck Morgan Stanley and your noble attempts at sixteen hour work days like the rest of those sheep. For what? I'm going to give you the fucking world!"

The waitress appeared with their appetizers and Edward nervously popped a stuffed mushroom into his mouth, buying a precious few seconds before having to speak.

He used to agree with his uncle's philosophy when it came to love, but he no longer believed that love was overrated. Carlisle was dripping in money and pussy, never having to submit to anyone or anything because everyone was too busy bowing down to him. He loved his uncle but wondered if he ever grew lonely. He was pretty certain that Carlisle was going to be upset about his news.

He swallowed his mushroom and took a sip of the wine glass that had been placed before him. Clearing his throat nervously, he spoke.

"I met someone."

Carlisle smirked and nodded his head.

"I figured as much. Sixteen hours a day didn't quite make sense. Pussy *does*. You're in your mid-thirties. I went through that stage once."

Edward was surprised by hearing this. He never remembered his uncle sharing his life with anyone that he could remember.

"What happened?"

Carlisle noticed the confusion on his nephew's face and chuckled.

"You wouldn't have remembered because you were so small at the time. I got married. It was a mistake. She died before the divorce was even finalized and I realized that it was just a stage; that I could find what I wanted, when I needed, because wealth opens up every door, Edward. I don't think it's wise to pass up the kind of opportunity I'm offering you just because you *think* you have a woman tying you to New York. For one of her I can give you twenty. At once, if you wanted. You'll have so many willing bitches sucking and serving your every whim that you'll soon realize that you were staying for nothing."

Edward had already been *there* and done *that*.

There was truth in what his uncle was saying, but there was also skepticism and

misogyny weighing his uncle's beliefs about women. Edward was pretty certain that no matter how hard he searched or how much money he had, he would *never* find another Bella. Kinks, ropes, knots, erotic exploration and all. Just thinking about her was making him hard.

"I'm in love with her, Carlisle."

His uncle's head was suddenly thrown back, laughter echoing off of the ceiling. Patrons looked at him and he didn't care. He never did.

His chin came forward again and he looked at his smiling nephew square in the eye.

"Does she know how much you're going to be worth?"

Edward shook his head.

"She knows nothing, and that makes her even more appealing to me, because it's *me* she wants. She only knows that I live in your penthouse as a favor from my generous uncle. She doesn't ever ask me for anything, and we don't go out much. She's kind of a homebody, like I am. We keep ourselves entertained ... "

Carlisle's laughter escalated even further, knowing damn well that the homebody was probably not the cookie baking sort.

"So you share common interests, then ... "

Carlisle pointed a meticulously manicured finger at his nephew.

" ... I'm onto you, Eddie. The yacht's interior designer asked me about your requests for those unusual ceiling hooks and other tress specifications. It was a challenge for him to mask them, to create a cohesive design flow, and it took him two weeks to design the ceiling around your hidden little treasures. *She* must be something. Call her. Invite her to join us. I've got to meet her now."

Edward knew it wasn't a request. Nothing his uncle put his mind to ever was. Carlisle was a force to be reckoned with, and he admired his uncle's tenacity. He hoped he'd have his Uncle's Midas touch for success and he loved his mentor and friend very much. Edward smiled when he spoke about the woman that occupied nearly all of his thoughts.

"She's an artist. She may be tied up at her studio but I'll try her."

Edward chuckled at his unintentional double meaning.

Carlisle smiled in response.

"Try her. See if she can come. We're only starting our appetizers. We can order her an entree."

*Oh, she can come alright.*

Edward grew even harder underneath the table just thinking about it. He was grateful for the long tablecloths.

Edward pulled out his phone and sent her a quick text. Moments later, he received a response.

"She'll be here in about 15 minutes. She loves muscles ... "

*Strained sore by the most sensual, restraining, contorted positions.*

Edward's erection had become distracting. Bella was heroin, and he'd never get enough of her fix. He was going to take her home and drink her pussy dry.

Carlisle was perplexed by Edward's sudden pause in speech. This bitch had really rattled his nephew's synapses. He figured it must be some amazing pussy.

"Well, you know how delicious the mussels are here. I'll get the waitress and place the order for her. I look forward to meeting her."

Carlisle waved his hand until he had the waitress' attention, and then placed the order. They continued their small talk until Carlisle stopped speaking mid-sentence, his mouth dropped open slightly, his eyes fixed on a spot near the door.

Edward turned to follow his gaze, his smile widening when he saw his love looking for him.

"Here she is now. Bella!"

Bella's luminous smile lit up her face as she turned and walked towards Edward, who stood as she approached, reaching into him to kiss him on the cheek.

Carlisle stood and walked around the table to take her hand, his lips touching her knuckles.

"Enchanted, Bella."

"It's nice to finally meet you, Mr. Cullen."

She smiled and pulled her hand away from Carlisle's, shrugging off her sweater and placing it on the back of her chair before sitting down.

"Thank you for the invitation to lunch. Edward's told me so much about you."

Carlisle nodded his head and sat down quickly, smiling his widest smile.

He was suddenly salivating, hungry for something that was not on the menu. He swallowed back his thoughts and tried to engage her in conversation.

"Please, call me Carlisle. Edward tells me you're an artist. Have you always been creatively inclined?"

She blushed and nodded her head quickly, her brown hair shining in the mood lighting set above her.

"Yes, from a very early age. My first job was painting lemonade stand signs when I was seven."

Edward chuckled in response.

"I didn't know that about you! It's fitting that you've worked on designing advertisements in your career."

She nodded and took a sip of the wine that had been placed before her.

*And I still love lemonade too.* Carlisle's voice interrupted her sudden desire for some with her meal.

"I admire anyone who is able to channel their creativity or interests in a way that earns them a living."

Carlisle looked pointedly at his nephew and then took a sip of his wine as Bella's voice rippled over their silent contemplation.

"What about you, Edward?"

Edward laughed to himself before returning his empty wine glass down to the

table in front of him to answer her question.

"The video store owned by my best friend's father. His store had an extensive porn selection and every teenage boy for miles would fight for the summer jobs because his dad used to let us watch whatever we wanted as long as we kept the place clean."

Everyone laughed in response, Carlisle graciously pouring more wine into his nephew's glass.

The waitress arrived at their table to deliver their meals, a large platter of mussels placed in front of Bella, followed by Carlisle's steak and Edward's tuna. Edward shook his head when he noticed the bloody puddle seeping onto his Uncle's white plate. Carlisle smirked in response, pointing his fork at the man sitting next to him.

"Don't give me that look, Eddie. I've always eaten my meat this way."

Edward laughed loudly, pointing his own fork at the bloody plate.

"Any rarer and it would still be walking."

Carlisle brought his fork and knife to the flesh of the steak, smooth movements slicing through it like butter. His tongue slipped over his bottom lip as he placed the piece onto his waiting tongue.

"Well Eddie, I might still eat it even *then*."

He winked at his nephew and turned to look at the laughing woman across from them. Carlisle's eyebrow lilted upward, an unspoken question as he lifted his glass of wine to his lips.

The right side of Bella's lips rose higher than her left, her eyes dancing with her unspoken thought. She turned to Edward to tease him.

"I think you know that a little blood never hurt anyone."

Edward felt fortunate that he had swallowed the wine in his mouth prior to her speaking. He coughed instead. Bella and Carlisle both chuckled in response, her voice once again adding to the lighter conversation.

"I wonder how much mercury you're ingesting in *your* choice of Tuna. I'd take *bloody* any day ... "

Carlisle raised his glass in Bella's direction to toast her, turning to glance at his blushing nephew.

"I like her, Eddie. Anyone who agrees with me and puts you in your place at the same time deserves to be worshiped."

Edward raised his glass to a blushing Bella and drank quickly, his other hand reaching for hers. It had been resting on the table just beside him, and he had been distracted with the faint rope burns still visible on her wrist. He brushed her raised skin reverently and he sat his glass down. They were a little bloody a few days ago. She definitely had a point.

Carlisle's attention had also been drawn to the faint patterned lines and blemishes marring her delicate, pale skin. He watched their gentle exchange from afar, realizing that there was no stemming the tide of uncontrollable passion he felt rising within him. It had remained dormant for many years and was now flooding to the surface.

Her beautiful little voice drew his attention away from his nephew thumb fucking her wrist wound.

"What about you, Carlisle? What was your first job?"

He grinned at the memory.

"I delivered newspapers ... "

"Oh man, up at the ass crack of dawn. That must have been tough."

His nephew's voice was distracting - an irritant. Carlisle frowned before looking at the beautiful woman sitting across from his bloody steak, his response wielding a flourishing edge.

"Not at all. I learned to deal with many situations, and when things grew monotonous, I found ways to make my route more exciting. We've all had to adapt on our first jobs and any since, haven't we? Creating excitement is what makes our attempts at living worthwhile."

*Hunting parties always had that effect on me, anyway.*

Carlisle sliced a small bit of meat, elegantly spearing it onto his fork, slowly bringing it to his wine and blood stained lips.

Bella found him fascinating. She also had to admit his attractiveness. It boded well for her boyfriend in years to come. There was a detectable resemblance between the uncle and nephew, and she suddenly felt fortunate to have been invited to meet Edward's fascinating, enigmatic relative.

She turned to Edward to flash him a small smile before lifting her glass in a toast.

"To making life more exciting."

Both men smiled, happily raising their glasses to kiss hers.

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Excusing himself quickly, Carlisle paid the bill and left the restaurant quickly to escape his rushing thoughts. He desired time to think. He walked a few steps to the alley and stepped into it, leaning against the dingy wall, not caring about his expensive clothing.

He attempted deep breaths but they never materialized, failing to rise in his chest under the flooding weight of the darkest desires he had long since learned to suppress.

Carlisle Cullen's devious hands had made many kinds of knots in his rope of life and in all the lives he had ever come into contact with, twisting and bending at will, pulling and tugging at everyone in his path without a second thought. He had always been selfish, interested only in furthering his own needs. His self-gratification extended to every facet of his life. He cared about no one, made his own rules, took what he desired and manipulated others into believing that was how it *should* be.

As he grew into a man, his needs became infinitely more complex. He demanded respect and got it, earning him more money, sex and power than he knew what to do with, yet only *he* knew his truest nature. His facade began slipping the moment he laid eyes on *her*, the beast reawakening with a violent roar.

He heard his nephew's familiar laughter on the sidewalk and he turned to observe the retreating couple walking arm in arm towards the penthouse. The realization of his nephew's obvious happiness allowed Carlisle to stave his initial hunger, but there was no altering his growing need, his dawning contempt for his nephew, the one person he believed he loved over all others, because Edward now had what he wanted ... what he knew he would *enjoy* in so many ways.

Carlisle admired her retreating form as he watched his nephew's arm wrap loosely around her waist. He admired the succulent curve of her legs. He held his breath when he noticed the tell-tale bite marks of a rope rising in the perfect pattern around her ankles, to match those around her wrists. He had no doubt that others existed beneath her clothes, and he coveted his nephew's toy even more.

Carlisle normally had no lasting use for a cunt because they always were attached to bitches that required too much energy for maintenance.

He was certain that Bella was no exception, and that made him question his nephew's sanity.

But despite his certainty about Bella, he was convinced that she would be his most satisfying pursuit yet. And Carlisle Cullen never failed to get what he wanted.

He smiled at the ideas that began flooding his racing mind because as experience had taught him, there were a multitude of options. His smile grew along with the memories and future plans for her in particular.

It was time for some sport.

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Bella heard the footsteps entering her area of the art studio and was surprised when Carlisle came into view. She was unable to wipe the red paint from her hands and face before greeting him properly.

"Carlisle! I was expecting a client to come view her commission and I was hurrying to add some finishing touches. I'm sorry I'm such a mess ... "

"Don't worry about the mess, Bella. I happen to think that red makes the perfect complimentary color on your pale skin. I was just in the neighborhood and wanted to stop by to say hello. May I see the piece you're working on?"

Bella was always happy to share her artwork with others, but she suddenly felt anxiety about disappointing any expectations of her boyfriend's uncle. She'd always worried about the opinions of others despite her attempts at pushing those unhelpful concerns aside. It was no use now. She was already shaking with nerves over his assessment of her abilities. She wanted to impress him for Edward's sake.

She motioned for him to follow her with her hand and they strode the few steps to stand in front of the large painting with huge drop cloths beneath it. He noticed the absence of any marks on her ankles or legs and that disappointed him immensely.

He drew his attention to the picture that occupied most of the large wall, splatters of red dissecting various disjointed lines, some raised with thicker paint while others dripped with greens and blues.

*Blood. Bruising. Rigor mortis. The imagery had so much potential. Perhaps he underestimated her depth of understanding.*

She silently observed his reactions while he continued to rake his eyes over the canvas.

"I hope that I don't insult you when I say this but when I look at this, I sense violence."

Bella smiled and nodded her head in response, grateful for his assessment. It had been dead on.

"You are right to sense that violence. It was commissioned by a client who was once trapped in an abusive relationship. She told me her story and this is the result."

Carlisle turned to look at her beautiful face for a moment, his eyes imploring with unspoken questions.

"Bella, I'm curious about something ... "

He took a step closer to her and paused for effect, hoping to keep her on edge. It worked, visible to him as her chest began rising faster with nervous breaths.

*She was going to be so much fun.*

"... can I see your other works?"

She took a step back and nodded enthusiastically.

*So ready to please. Perfect.*

She walked across the large space and threw off the tarps of five other paintings, many using similar colors and textures as the first, all using the color red in the same application.

He nodded and looked at her again after many minutes had passed. He didn't say a word as he stared into her eyes. The rise and fall of the apron over her chest increased in the silence.

"Are all of your paintings this ... repetitive?"

Her face fell in disappointment, his question wounding her creative spirit. She'd spent many years trying to perfect a signature style to her pieces, and as she looked over the pieces she'd just shared with him, she saw their distinct differences, not the commonality of her application. Her heart sank and it was written clearly on her face. Carlisle touched her arm in a soothing action of comfort.

"I don't think I put that correctly. What I meant to ask was whether you feel your client's story had any tangible bearing on your artistic creations. Did you also complete these after hearing her story?"

She shook her head in response. She'd completed this series of pictures five years earlier.

"When I used the word repetitive, I meant in a more positive, dependable, lasting sense. There is a meaningful, underlining message and feeling that you incorporate into your works consistently."

She looked at the group of five paintings again in silent contemplation.

He remained silently patient, still, waiting to see what she might reveal.

"I ... I suppose that when submitting my work to the track of *that* train of thought, I would have to admit that I tend to see ... violence in ordinary things or situations. I'm drawn to darker thoughts when others might not be. Ideas that probably should scare me, don't usually. Now that you point that fact out to me, I do see a theme to my collective body of work that I had not realized before."

He reached to wipe a tear from her cheek, smearing red paint deeper into her pale skin.

*Cutdeeperdeeperdeepercut.*

"Then this is a pleasant surprise, because we have something in common, Bella. I often see or sense violence in situations where others might not. And because we share in that tendency, I'm probably attributing my own thoughts into what I'm gleaning from your visual interpretations of that fact. *Your* body of work is very

interesting."

*And it will be even more interesting when I've reaped the rewards.*

He was already bored with trying to placate her ego. He wanted a latte.

"I'll be back in town next month. Perhaps you and Edward will join me for dinner? I think this time I'll try the muscles."

*Yours.*

She nodded and tried to smile.

"I was just telling Edward yesterday that I was craving mussels."

*I know. I hear everything, pet. I was there and neither of you knew it.*

"Then it's a date."

A date with an outcome he intended to keep.

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It had been a week, yet Bella had been unable to paint anything since Carlisle's visit. Her anxious mind was unable to let go of the memory of his words.

Repetitive.

Interesting.

She hated the word *interesting* because she was unable to decipher what he really meant. That fucking word held so many possibilities.

She couldn't stop picking apart the wounds of her past, self-doubt and anxiety tearing away sutures that had been carefully threaded into place, paranoia and debilitating anxiety resurfacing amongst her disjointed blues, greens and reds.

She stood in her studio, analyzing years of hard work and creative visions. In some of her earlier works, she recognized how the actions of her self-absorbed, negligent parents seeped into her creativity. The pictures she completed in her early teens

reflected the distance she sensed from them.

The picture with the outline of a male hand had its origin in the way she had been beaten by the grandfather who never loved her. He would tell her that often. As if the hand prints left on her body weren't enough *proof*.

The painting with the words strung together to form premature wrinkles in a child's forehead represented the teasing she always received from her cruel, judgmental peers.

The ones with the boxes were done while she was in the eleventh grade. She was trying to express how stigmatized she felt by those around her.

They all had very personal meaning to her and were completed under very different circumstances and yet as she looked at them *now*, it was impossible to get beyond the resemblances of color and composition structure.

Repetitive.

Carlisle was *right*.

She began experiencing a tightening in her chest that she hadn't felt in over a year. She knew a panic attack was in her very near future. She'd go home and take her medication, and consider how she'd alter her pieces to interject some individuality.

Hello, Xanax.

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She was more paranoid than ever. She was unable to find her meds anywhere, ripping her small studio apartment apart in a frantic, fruitless search. The tightening of her chest increased when she looked under her bed to reach for the hiding place of her discarded purse, only to find it missing too.

She'd felt so despondent at the clusterfuck of her creativity the previous day, that she threw her bag under her bed in frustration, only shoving her key into her pocket. She'd even left her phone in her bag because Edward had a deadline and was working eighteen hour days for the next few days. There was no reason to lug a purse around when her emotional baggage was enough of a burden.

She began to panic, worried about what other prized possessions might be missing, yet everything else of value seemed to be in place.

Her agitation grew at the loud sounds of fire engines that sped by far below, adding to the soundtrack of chaos growing in her anxiety. Her grandmother's diamond pendant was worth ten thousand at least, and it remained, undisturbed, in plain view on her dresser.

She stared at the diamond glistening in the sun streaming into her large window, a scintillating dot she hoped would calm her fraying nerves.

When *that* didn't work, Bella ran to her closet, the only other place she hid her valuables. Her shaking fingers physically accounted for her belongings. Until she reached the back and saw a lid out of place. Her beloved ropes were gone too.

Yet everything else left seemed completely undisturbed.

Except her.

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She ran down Sixth, frantically navigating her way in the direction of the mayhem of smoke and sirens, not caring that her bare, bloody feet were traversing the glass ridden sidewalk.

She was in too much of a panic when she fled her apartment in her already despondent state, leaving her shoes somewhere beneath the mess she created in searching for her meds.

She didn't have time to worry about shoes when so much more was at stake, her sense of dread escalating when she arrived, barefoot, to the end of her block.

The smoke now pouring out of her charred work studio began smothering the remaining vestiges of control, her emotions slipping into shattering shards of pain that had everything on the bleeding wounds beneath the soles of her feet.

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"Mr. Cullen, you have a visitor, sir."

Angela had been Edward's assistant since his promotion into her department, and she sensed relief at seeing the mess that was waiting for him in the reception area. If that was the caliber of woman he chose to warm his bed, she was suddenly very grateful that he rejected her advances.

His eyebrows strained against his forehead in surprise. He stood abruptly and walked towards the reception area, wondering who would need to speak with him after hours. He looked at his watch. Nearly midnight. He'd tried calling Bella hours ago with no response, and then he'd lost track of time with his deadline looming. His colleagues shirked their responsibilities or any sense of urgency hours ago. The project had been usurped by their need to visit their local watering hole.

*Alcoholics. My uncle was right. This really was a thankless job.*

When he rounded the corner, he was instantly struck by Bella's position on the reception couch, her elbows digging into her thighs, shoulders slumped forward, head bowed into her hands, her body shaking as she wept into the cow skin rug beneath her filthy, bare feet.

He ran to her, kneeling down on the floor and wrapping his arms around the quivering mess before him.

"I was ... robbed ... someone stole my p ... purse ... wal ... let ... phone ... med ... ication ... and then the f ... ire engi ... ns came to ... put ... out ... fire ... at t ... he studio ..."

He held onto her tightly as she breathlessly recounted what had happened, her gasps for air escalating with each passing second.

"Bella, you have to try to calm down because you're going to hyperventilate. Have you called the police? And where are your shoes?"

She began shaking violently against his chest, her hands grasping her chest and neck as she fought to draw breath.

Edward panicked and began screaming for help. He heard the sound of his Angela's heels against the marble floor before she rounded the corner, her cell phone in hand.

"Call 911! She's having difficulty breathing!"

For the briefest of moments when he was digesting his nervousness, Edward

wanted to laugh inappropriately after he shouted it. That *usually* meant that Bella was going to come. He shook his head to clear away the absurdity and continued to try to soothe her until the ambulance arrived.

He heard a flurry of heavy foot-falls and knew that the paramedics had arrived. The female urged Bella to lie back on the couch while the male began asking Edward the questions that Bella was unable to answer.

Soon they were speeding up Wall Street, swirling lights and sirens parting the traffic as Bella's condition disintegrated.

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They stood outside their ambulance to grab a smoke after passing off their female charge into the capable hands of the hospital's emergency room staff.

They were each on their third before either spoke.

"Did you notice her wrists and ankles? She said they were from consensual activity." She spoke to her partner quietly, a slight detection of humor and envy laced within her question.

Her partner nodded and smiled in response.

"I wish my wife would let me tie her up like that. I think I saw some rope marks around her stomach and breasts too, when her shirt rode up while you tried to take her blood pressure. Some men have all the luck getting their women to try that kinky shit."

She chuckled and took another long drag from her cancer stick. When she spoke, puffs of smoke escorted the words over her smiling lips.

"I sure as hell wouldn't say no if someone wanted to try that with me."

The sound of their pagers went off in unison, effectively silencing their conversation. They jumped in the cab of the ambulance and sped towards their next emergency.

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Many hours later, Edward found himself cradling an exhausted Bella in the back of a taxi cab. She was floating in her Dilaudid haze, and he wished she was given a prescription for *that*. He had the pleasure of being administered it when he went into the Emergency Room with a broken ankle a few years ago.

He rarely used drugs recreationally, but he'd gladly make an exception for the *Dilicious*.

He brought his lips to her sweaty forehead and she sighed happily at the contact. He would help her shower and then hold her till she cried it out. The fire department had tracked her down at the hospital and confirmed that nothing was salvageable. Every picture she'd ever completed, every sketch and every sculpture - they were all irrevocably lost.

Edward would run out to buy her another phone in the morning, and take her to replace her driver's license when she was ready. He was going to devote every second supporting and loving Bella in any way he could. He was able to understand why she had the severe panic attack she did after so many unfortunate events transpiring all at once. And he'd been working like an animal for no real reason, neglecting the woman who now held a firm place in his heart.

He wouldn't leave her side. He was quitting Morgan Stanley immediately.

They could kiss his ass.

---

o~~~O~~~o

"You need to rest, love. It's only been a week and the doctors said that it would be a few more days before your feet were healed enough to walk on."

Bella convinced Edward to visit her apartment with him to pack some things. She'd been staying with him and was running out of clothes.

She shook her head and began weeping, unsure what she would do. She didn't think she would be able to remain in this place for much longer. She couldn't feel safe knowing that someone had rummaged so calculatingly through her things. Edward experienced the same anxiety about her remaining as well. He wanted her with him.

He wiped the tears flowing from her eyes with the pad of his thumb.

"Hey, no tears. Bella, I'm in love with you. Recent events made me realize just how much, and I want you to live with me, if that's what *you* want."

Bella nodded and tried to blink the tears away.

"I want that too, but you've already quit your job because of me. How are we going to afford to *live* ... "

He shook his head and she stopped speaking.

"Bella, believe me when I say that we have nothing to worry about. You'll never have to worry about making ends meet ever again. As a matter of fact, I was hoping that we could travel to someplace warm and relaxing, to escape all of this *crazy*. You sit down on your couch and take the pressure off your feet. You can dictate to me what you'd need for the next two months, and then we can come back for the rest after we get back. I'll take care of your rent and we can escape this shit for a while."

*Maybe forever.*

Edward wanted to spend the rest of his life with Bella, and hoped that she would agree to follow him to wherever he'd end up.

"Edward, I'd love to run away for a bit. Where will we go?"

He couldn't wait to dial the number, because he knew exactly who could make it happen.

---

**o~~~O~~~o**

Carlisle disconnected and placed the phone down on his bed, lifting the plate off the nightstand to complete eating his meal.

He wasn't surprised in the least, yet that didn't hinder him from feeling overjoyed with the fact that everything had fallen into place.

He'd gotten what he'd hoped for.

He looked down at his plate.

*Almost. All in good time.*

Edward would take the useless holewhore on a sun drenched holiday on the yacht and he would meet them in Portofino to assume control of his vessel. His nephew would get another taste of the call of the sea, and Bella would get a tan.

*Sunshine always made things a bit sweeter.*

He nodded at his thought and closed his eyes to savor what remained of his meal, yet he still remained unsatisfied.

She didn't have the flavor he was expecting. At least he wouldn't have to listen to her complain about how his nephew had deplorable taste in women after he inquired about Edward's whereabouts. Carlsile was already convinced that Edward made a questionable choice in romantic partner.

*Kind of.*

Angela was so accommodating to him when he visited Edward's office the day following the studio blaze. Not even ten minutes after stepping into his nephew's vacated office and he was already pumping into her mouth to shut the cunt up. It was easy to get her to agree to dinner after that. It was even easier to convince the slut to accompany him upstairs.

Pity that she was as bitter on the palate as she was in attitude. Pity, indeed.

---

o~~~O~~~o

"Jesusfuck, Edward. I've never seen a boat like *this* before."

Edward laughed, because not many had. It was in a class all its own. The only other person with a mega yacht of this caliber was a prince of Dubai, and even that one was smaller. He enveloped her small hand in his larger one and led her towards the back of the large vessel. Bella laughed loudly when they grew closer, the name inscribed clearly on its glistening white stern.

## **FORGET ME KNOT**

Bella shook her head, her voice purling with humor until she was able to stop laughing long enough to speak.

"Must be genetic."

Edward nodded, joining in her burst of exuberance. He loved the sound of her laughter. He missed it as of late.

He pulled her forcefully towards the ramp leading to the entrance of the vessel, excited to get their holiday underway.

"Come on, I'll introduce you to the crew and then I'll take you on a tour."

---

o~~~O~~~o

Bella was amazed at the luxury that dripped from every inch of the vessel, and was overwhelmed by the fact that it would all be Edward's one day. Her's even, if he had his way. They'd talked about marriage far in the future, and she'd agreed to the concept in a distant sense. Now that she realized the ease in which they would live without her contributing financially, it became more of a probable likelihood, and sooner rather than later. She'd always been preoccupied by making ends meet. Now that it didn't matter, her anxiety about lacking in resources began to fade away.

Her parents always had acrimony surround their finances and their marriage was miserable. She never wanted that for herself.

When he opened up the door that allowed them entrance into his personal suite, she padded in quietly, her healed feet relishing in the fibers of the carpet tickling her resolve to wait for anything anymore.

"You're too quiet. Tell me what's on your mind."

Bella frowned and hesitated looking at him in response. She didn't want to sound like the discovery of his wealth mattered to her, yet it *did*. Emotional weights started lessening, her burdens falling away with the swaying motion of the vessel as it floated towards their sun.

"I'm trying to digest everything you've just shown and told me. This will all be yours, and I'm just thinking about how that changes things."

His penetrating gaze beckoned her to meet his own.

"Does it?"

She nodded and smiled shyly, knowing that her happiness had been knotted to his

the moment she met him.

"Edward, I ... I've never felt control of much in my life. Nothing has ever been *easy* for me. My family chooses to remain distant because they think I'm a failure chasing useless dreams. I've never had anything given to me, and I feel like so much has been taken away lately. The one thing I know, despite all of this ... "

Her right hand swept the air in front of them dramatically, her voice rising slightly in excitement.

" ... is that you are the best thing that's ever been given to me in my life. I just want to be with you. And I will stay with you forever, if that's what *you* want, because it's what *I* want. But ... I ... "

"Tell me, Bella. Just tell me, but know that there's nothing you can say that will change my mind. I want you to be *mine*, for the rest of my life."

Bella smiled at the fact that Edward was so sure. Perfect. True. She nodded and drew breath to give her strength.

"Edward, as great as all this is, it's hard to accept the fact that I'll be going from one extreme to another. And things are still out of my control. It'll be something I'll have to wrap my thoughts around."

He chuckled in response, cupping his palm around the base of her neck, bringing her towards him.

"That gives me an idea."

He brought his lips to hers, dragging out her moans and breaths and he pulled at her shirt, bringing her closer to his chest.

He'd been gentle with her lately, walking on eggshells and navigating between her anxiety and physical wounds. He wanted to give her back some of the control that he knew she needed. Wanted, as she just admitted to. She would be provided for, never having to worry about anything ever again. He could give her anything.

Including his uncharacteristic submission.

The temporary power she would experience could make all the difference. He knew that for a fact.

He pulled away from their kiss and smiled down at her.

"I have a few surprises in this room that I know we're both going to enjoy."

He laughed to himself excitedly as he dropped his hand from her neck, jumping onto the bed with his feet. He stretched high above his head and removed a panel in the ceiling above it, cranking a lever slowly to drop down a metal plate containing a multitude of hooks.

Bella got wet just looking at it. She decided that she may never need to leave this vessel ever again. The possibilities of pleasure were endless. Edward chuckled at understanding Bella's expression. He concurred, without ever hearing her say the words.

He reached into another panel and pulled out bunches of rope meticulously tied into bundles of pleasure just waiting to be unraveled.

Her breathing increased when he began unbuttoning his shirt and slacks, his salacious grin full of promises.

"I wanna bottom, I want to *give* everything to you. I need you in charge, love."

Edward pulled his clothes off quickly, not giving Bella much of an opportunity to object. She'd never topped before, and yet she wasn't saying no. He wanted to give her this opportunity to take some control, in some small way. She had the propensity to become shy and withdrawn when given an option, which kept him from making the offer prior to this moment. He'd hoped that she would be willing to assume the reigns in the literal sense.

He smiled when she stepped closer, lifting the red six millimeter gauged hemp from the bed, the color he hoped she would make his skin as she wrapped him up in her own design. He loved the implication of offering himself as a gift. His complete submission was unexpected and something she knew was never offered to anyone else, the connotation that along with his wealth, she would have ownership of *him* just as he hoped from *her*.

Edward paused, stepping out of his slacks as he watched her unravel the long rope, moaning when she reached forward and upward to drag the vellicate fibers against his nipples. She pushed the rope downward against his twitching abdominal muscles until the red fibers grazed and gathered the saturation off the head of his leaking prick. She leaned further to place her tongue against it, tracing the rope around his shaft, collecting what she could on her taste buds.

He dropped to his knees on the bed before she got distracted. He wanted to be bound, and he needed her to do it.

"Instruct me as I go."

Bella's voice pleaded for help, but also held an edge of something else he'd never heard before. He wanted to hear it again.

He nodded and began pointing to various sections of his anatomy.

"The square knots go here. You can use French bowlines here and here and ... "

She was licking his abdomen, stunting his words in his throat, his cock growing harder.

His hand dragged lower as she began to pull the rope around his neck and the feeling of the rope, coupled with the sensation of her heated fingertips, drove his breaths into his ribcage, pulling his lungs into a cadence that escalated with each passing second, the skin over his ribs, chest and neck biting into the tight ropes, begging for more.

His voice cracked beneath the escalating sensations as she circled the rope along his heaving chest tightly, reaching behind him to bind his waist, his finger tracing lower against his inflamed skin.

"A clove hitch will go here and a half hitch will go here. The slipping reef knot will go here just in case you need to release me quickly. The anchor hitch is the best for attaching the part of these suspension ropes to the truss but I'm not sure I'm gonna last that long, Bella. You can use a cow hitch around my torso ... yes ... just there, oh my god, you are amazing at this ... I'm so turned on by the fact that you are the one doing this to me ... "

She smiled at his praise and pulled the ropes even tighter against his skin. She decided that she liked the red ropes in comparison to the pale ones. They needed to order more of them. *STAT*.

"Do you like tying me up into your own masterpiece of knots, my beautiful one?"

His voice was weak and wanting, passion dripping off his question like his dripping cock. She nodded in response, walking around the bed to attach his waist ropes to the ones now encircling his wrists, then binding them so tight that he nearly screamed. *Nearly*.

He always enjoyed watching Bella practice her self-control of her responses to the stimulus of pain. Now he was enjoying it himself. He decided that he wanted to bottom more often.

"Any last requests, before I go lower?"

Her voice held a new assertiveness, despite her question. She was still considering his needs, and for that he was even more turned on. He closed his eyes and tilted his head back. He no longer wanted to see. He only wanted to submerge himself beneath the swelling sensations of submission.

"Make the loop around my cock and scrotum extra sound. I don't want it to slip when you fuck me. I'd like the pain of the taut grip while you ride me ... "

He heard a thump and he smiled, keeping his eyes closed. He didn't need to see her undress, throwing off her clothes in excitement. He relished in the pause, causing him to anticipate her next actions even more. After a few tantalizingly torturous moments, she surprised him by bringing the rope upward rather than delving lower, an improvisation that excited him even further. He liked to improvise too, depending on his mood. He was glad she was choosing to be impetuous, to chart her own course with the ropes she was binding to his body.

The tug around his neck grew tighter and he began to gasp into his binds, his eyelids tightening when he sensed something changing in his reactions to her ministrations.

Rope play *was* edge play, and now he began feeling the reality of that edge cutting through his pleasure. He knew he had to calm his breathing even though it was getting harder to draw breath, yet as the seconds grew, the ropes seemed to grow tighter and he began to panic.

"Such a pity, yet I *needed* her and couldn't wait for her any longer. It couldn't be helped."

Edward's eyes flew open in disbelief, Carlisle's face coming into view. Edward's panic intensified when his eyes left his uncle's and he strained against his binds to look around the room for Bella. When he arched his back against the mattress, he was able to crane his neck at an angle that allowed him to turn slightly, his eyes widening in terror when he realized that her body was motionless on the floor near the base of the bed.

"She's irresistible, Edward. You have excellent taste, and I'll find out for myself

soon enough."

The rope around his neck restricted and asphyxiated, his gasps escalating and the edges of his vision fading and blending into the fear that began overtaking his consciousness. His frenzied attempts at pulling at the weakest knots to loosen them was the last thing he remembered before the stars in his vision overtook the light in his room, leaving him only the desperate sensation of floating away from the only woman he had ever loved.

Moments of strange sounds would return him to consciousness for a few frightening seconds while the bed jostled beneath him, and then he would be dragged back into the darkness, re-submerged in deadly silence beneath the constriction of the rope cutting into his neck.

And just as he began succumbing to the blackness, the binds felt as though they were slacking, the knots unraveling and peeling away from his body violently, freeing him and allowing his body to move. To breathe.

The mattress felt real, as did the fear that was keeping him under.

"Ed ... ward."

Bella's voice was muffled beneath the haze of his terror. He opened his eyelids to look in the direction of her voice but saw only static, his gasps for breath resounding soundly in his ears.

He sat up suddenly, his vision ameliorating through the vicious haze of realizations from moments ago.

There, hovering over Edward's waist, was Bella. Her eyes were wild, her body wracking with uncontrollable sobs as she pulled him towards her, the cadence of their heartbeats straining beneath the terrifying moments that led them to hold each other on the bed.

Edward was barely able to register the room around him, but as his far sight rectified beneath the horrified wails of the love in his arms, he saw his Uncle's gridelin hued face and lifeless eyes looking at them, his upper body slumped forward on the bed. A rope was around his neck.

"He ... I surprised him, after he thought his choke hold got me down ... I stayed still until he crawled up onto ... you and caught him by surprise ... Oh ... Edw ... ard ... "

Edward pulled Bella closer to his chest at remembering Carlisle's words just before he lost consciousness, thankful that the brave woman in his arms was able to save them both from their own horrific demise by finding the strength within herself to overtake his uncle.

Unable to look in the face of the terrifying truth any longer, Edward kicked the dead beast's head with his bare foot until the body rolled off the bed, an inaudible, resounding applause of the souls of his victims reacting in unison.

Still trembling from shock, Edward and Bella held each other until they were able to compose themselves enough to alert the staff. Soon after, the authorities arrived. They were thankful to have remained among the living, grateful to be free from the binding horror of what might have been. Little did they know how many souls had been freed in *ending* Carlisle Cullen.

Mrs. Porter.

Ms. Tinsley.

Ms. Simpson.

Jessica Stanley.

Alice Brandon.

Mrs. Brandon.

Mrs. Smith.

Ms. Plano.

Delilah Parks.

He had been a *very* busy boy.

The blond haired beauty in Lousiville.

The preacher's wife in Mississippi.

Esme Platt-Cullen.

The runaways in Chicago and Madrid.

And Lisbon.

And London.

And Rome.

And Paris.

And New York.

Angela Webber.

The desperate and unsuspecting.

Tragically, he had also been a very productive man.

By *his* standards, anyway.

Every one of Carlisle's victims finally regained their freedom, unbound from the malignant life force that had been tying them to their final resting places with his implacable ropes and deadly sport of knots.

They were all now able to go to where ever it was they were headed - Including Carlisle Cullen. His fate after death far exceeded the terror he inflicted on his many victims.

Now that wasn't a *pity* at all.

o~~~O~~~o

The authorities found Carlisle's journals in his pied-a-terre in Paris, buried within momentos he'd saved from his victims, corroded fragments of a psychopathic fiend.

Edward was the sole heir to his uncle's vast fortune, and he and Bella chose to sell any material possessions associated with or acquired during Carlisle's life, donating millions to the families of the victims ... undertaking the unsettling atonement for the merciless savagery and havoc he enacted.

They assumed another surname after marrying and slipped off the radar despite the world wide press reporting of the countless horrors Carlisle inflicted on so many.

Over time, they were able to move beyond the debilitating terror surrounding the knowledge of Carlisle's infamy to find some semblance of joy in the life that they set out to make for themselves, together. Yet their minds were never far from their own experiences, the terrible facts that the journals revealed and the detailed narratives that Carlisle Cullen relished in documenting about his victims. The tensivity of his inflicted anguish and his horrific actions ruined so many lives, and those actions would ensure that his legacy, no matter how heinous, would live on.

The untenable vestiges of the monster would remain forgotten not.

**o~~~The End~~~o**

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**A/N for anyone who's interested in reading these things:** The direction of this one shot was influenced by Angelspit's song 100% (this song can be found on the Youtube channel in my profile):

Dip my tail in blood ink

Write it down in red

Scribe the words "Happy meal"

Right across your head

Tired of getting walked on

Treated like a sheep

Don't blame me for all the years

That you were asleep

Relax

God is in control

Watch the dot

Take your meds

Obey my demands

Time for surgery

Shut your eyes

Your dead

Bathing in your arrogance

Dining will ensue

God made me a cannibal

To fix problems like you

Last time was the last time...

This time, you're one hundred percent fucked.

As some of you are aware a year ago this Halloween, I fell ten feet when a ladder collapsed while I was standing on it. Neck injuries, back injuries, broken bones, concussion and a host of other issues...it was a very frightening experience. After I was wheeled from the ambulance and rushed into a Cat-Scan, then a MRI, the doctors came in and told me that I needed to make an appointment with my gynecologist as soon as I was well enough and mobile enough. I went within weeks, and they started doing tests on what I thought were the least of my worries.

Wrong.

Had I not experienced that fall, the *something* they saw on the scans would not have led them to perform many more tests that would catch Stage 1 Cervical Cancer in its treatable infancy. I spent many months since that fall feeling as though potential deadly health situations were *stalking* me. My life in the past year feels as though it's been filled with angst of the worst possible kind.

I saw the picture prompt of the open window with the rope hanging from it when 22Blue's and Katinki's Angst contest was just beginning to be mentioned around the fandom, and knew I had an opportunity to try to purge much of my anxiety by facing it and trying to explore it, creatively, by telling a story comparing my personal kinks with my worst possible fears. I personally enjoy Shibari. And suspension in Corsets. And many of the other things listed in my warning. LOL! Carlisle Cullen embodied

the fear of death I felt was threatening me as things continued to happen to me in close succession. A rope can be pleasurable. It can also be harmful, even deadly. Lately, I've felt that I was bound by the negative series of events that seemed to pile one on top of the other, fibers of fear constricting around me in the tightest and most unforgiving series of knots.

That is how this story came to be. I am well now. They removed parts of my cervix and I am cancer free after many months of tests following the procedures. My prognosis is very good. I'm hopeful for the future and I'm thankful that it was discovered so early. I encourage each of you to have your yearly PAP test. I'm 38 years old and had no symptoms. It wasn't even on my radar. **I hope you read this message and take action for yourself.**

I thank KarenSanDiego for being the encouraging friend that inspires me to translate my fears into words that would help me purge them. I thank RandomCran for being my Beta on this story and for her wonderful friendship. I thank Elliedgasmswoon for her unwavering support as I contemplated if *this* was the best avenue to explore the mentally challenging emotions I was experiencing. She walked me through every step. She is a treasure to me. All of these lovely ladies are, as are many more in this fandom that I haven't mentioned by name. This shit is long enough already and the muses all know who they are. \*tackleglumps and hugs you all tightly\*

If this year has taught me anything, it's that frightening experiences can also be very, VERY positive. It's why I gave Edward and Bella a HEA. I'm grateful for the lessons and the wisdom derived from knowing and now truly believing that blessings really do come in many forms, despite the angst and pain and terror of death and whatever else. It's why the last sentence of this story is intentional and so meaningful to me, personally. These lessons will be forgotten not.

Becca