

September 15

Tonight was my first real date with Edward. I asked him if we could call it a date, and he agreed. We went for a walk near Charlie's house. My house? The house I'm currently living/writing this in.

It drizzled a bit while we walked, which isn't surprising. It's rained at least a bit every day I've been here in Forks. I don't miss much about Phoenix, but I realize now that I took sunlight for granted. I wanted so badly for the sun to shine earlier when Edward and I were out. He told me what happens when he's in the sunlight. He said it's quite the sight, and not because he bursts into flames. I asked. I told him I didn't want to get burnt! ;)

He was still leaving space between us as we walk. I told him I didn't bite, and he laughed. (I'm surprised that he laughs when I make jokes like that. You'd think he'd have heard them literally a million times.)

He said he doesn't trust himself to get so close to the living. I said that if he's ever uncomfortable to tell me instead of hiding it and acting like a chump. A soft smile appeared on his lips then. He apologized and admitted that he's told me more about himself and his kind than he's used to. He's not one to open up. I get that. I haven't had anyone to talk to since moving here, and even before that, I may have had a some friends, but I didn't feel comfortable discussing the hard stuff - like what was going on with Mom.

I said I'd like to try being more open and asked if he'd be willing to try, too. He agreed!

September 20

Tonight Edward invited me over to his house after school. Wait. Did I say "house"? Because I meant baller ass estate! The place was bonkers! It was practically a castle. I'd never been in a house like it before. Back in Phoenix, a friend of mine lived in a pretty big place in the 'burbs, but it was all boring stucco walls and tile floors. Edward's place is covered in dark wood and heavy velvet curtains and massive fireplaces and - no joke - tapestries. Real tapestries emblazoned with the Cullen family crest adorn the foyer and hallways. Like I said: castle.

I got to meet Edward's "dad" Dr. Cullen. I mark that with quotations because Dr. Cullen isn't actually Edward's birth father. (I'm still getting used to how these things work.) For not being biological family, Edward and Dr. Cullen have a very similar look. They're both tall and thin, but not in a lanky and awkward way. They carry themselves confidently. There's a lot of strength in them. (The incident with me, Edward, and the van proved it, and then some.) I find it ridiculously attractive...

I told Dr. Cullen that I found him interesting. I'd like to know more about what it's like to be a vampire and a doctor. I think it would make an excellent book. ("Vampire Doctor." Ha! I'd read the hell out of that!) Dr. Cullen said that the stories he had could fill volumes and proposed that

maybe I could write them someday. That was pretty cool of him to say, even though I sensed a slight bit of hesitation.

After meeting Dr. Cullen, Edward and I sat down to watch a movie from the 50's called *All That Heaven Allows*. Edward said that it was one of his favorite films. It's about a middle-aged widow living in a small town who starts falling in love with her gardener, a younger man with awesome Elvis hair. He loves her back, but she's afraid to go through with it because her adult children and the people at the *country club* find the relationship to be inappropriate. It was one of the most beautiful-looking movies I've ever seen. Every color was bright and rich, and the scenery is unnaturally immaculate. The young gardener guy with Elvis hair fixes up and lives in an old mill that seems pulled right out of a storybook. It was gorgeous.

When the movie was over, Edward asked me what I thought. I told him how beautiful it looked, but that I hated the ending! He asked me why. It's a happy ending after all; the two lovers get together. I told him it didn't feel right. The woman first succumbs to the pettiness of her kids and her so-called friends and breaks it off with the gardener. She only gets back with him after her stupid daughter and doctor tell her to. Then the gardener gets into an accident, and she feels guilty, and they get back together after he wakes up from a coma or something. I said if I were that guy, I'd have told her to get lost and start thinking for herself for a change!

Yeah, I ranted a little. I felt so awkward when I was done. Then I noticed how close Edward was to me. Closer than he'd ever been. He didn't look angry at me for ripping into one of his favorite movies. Instead he was smiling. I haven't ever seen him smile at me like that.

Then he asked, "Bella Swan, where did you come from?"

I smiled back and told him, "Phoenix. Duh."

September 27

Two nights ago, we did a blood test. Wait. That doesn't sound right. A "blood test" is something specific. What we did was a test involving blood, I guess. Whatever it was, it didn't go well. I didn't write about it until now because it kind of freaked me out.

I want Edward to take me on a hike in Olympic National Park. He's lived in Forks a long ass time, so he knows his way around those trails. However, he wouldn't agree to go on a hike until we knew that he could control himself in the event that I should somehow draw blood. Fair enough, I thought.

We performed our experiment here at Charlie's house. He was out with Jacob's uncle, so I swiped a pair of handcuffs from his utility belt or whatever, and cuffed Edward to the radiator in the living room. Edward was a little worried that he might be able to break the cuff chain. I asked if he really thought he'd get that worked up at the sight of a teensy drop of blood. He agreed,

saying it was likely to be as safe as we could get, given our present circumstances. However, he did tell me to stand across the room near the front door, in case I needed to make a quick exit. Yeah, thinking back on it now, it sounds crazy!

However, at the time, I went with it. After all, it was just a prick on the tip of my thumb. A tiny bead of bright red appeared after a little squeeze, and I held my thumb up so that Edward could see it.

The change in his expression happened right away. His eyes grew wide in fear at first. He recoiled a little. Then he relaxed, and his eyes narrowed and focused directly on my thumb. He began breathing heavily through his nose. His shoulders pulled back and his head tilted forward. From beneath his strong brow, hungry eyes finally met mine.

I was scared then, and it only got worse when I heard the voice in my head - a whisper telling me to come closer. It was Edward's. I could feel the words. They were soft and warm, as if his mouth was not across the room but right above my neck. The hair there stood up in excitement. My whole body seemed to urge me forward. I took a single step closer, but just as my foot touched the floor, my own thoughts grew clear in head and I knew this was wrong. I immediately turned around and walked out of the room into the kitchen where I washed the blood from my thumb and threw water in my face.

I didn't go back into the living room for an hour after this. All that time, Edward remained cuffed to the radiator. He didn't shout or complain. When I finally re-entered, he apologized. I told him that I never wanted to hear his voice inside my head again. I told him doesn't belong in there. I remember how he hung his head as I said it. He told me he understood and apologized again. After a moment's hesitation, I unlocked him.

Like I said, that was two nights ago. Tonight we tried again. I know it was stupid, but this time Edward went out to feed beforehand. I forced him to tell me what he ate for some reason. I don't know why I felt so strongly about it; I guess it was the first time I'd asked him about this sort of thing. When he said it was a rabbit, I wished I hadn't asked. Poor bun-bun...

Anyway, we set everything else up the same, and - crazy though it was - it worked! Edward admitted to feeling a little ill at the sight of the blood bead, but I didn't notice any severe change in him. Not like before. With this successful test in the bag, we're going to try hiking this Friday after school.

Honestly, after writing this all down and reliving this nutso experience, I feel good! I feel much more ready to take on anything this ridiculous relationship throws at me. I think/hope Edward is starting to feel the same.

September 30

It's 7am on Saturday, and I just got home. (Thankfully, Charlie isn't back from his overnight patrol. Dodged an awkward argument there. Phew!) Edward and I just spent the whole night together!!! No, future Bella, that doesn't mean we slept together... Don't be such a perv!

But... It was pretty amazing night.

To start, Edward wanted to postpone our first big hike. He wasn't feeling confident in his ability to control himself after the mishap earlier this week. I was disappointed - not gonna lie. I really thought we'd passed a milestone together, and I told him so. He wasn't so sure.

We decided instead to walk through the woods behind Castle Cullen. At first, it reminded me of our date two weeks ago. We weren't talking, and Edward gave me a lot of space. It's hard to describe how I felt about it. Mostly frustrated, I guess. I like this guy, and he seems to like me back. We've had some trouble up front, but who doesn't at first? I wanted to get angry at him - to tell him that this was stupid and a step backward and that we should be going to Olympic National Park. But I didn't.

Instead, I began telling him how I like to write, and that I wasn't kidding when I said that I wanted to write about his father. I saw his expression lighten as I spoke. He was happy to hear it and started to tell me a few stories he'd gathered from Dr. Cullen over the years. Then I told him more about Arizona and the trouble with my Mom. Then he told me about a friend he lost back in the '60s.

Before we knew it, sunlight began to peek over the eastern mountains. The sky was clear and stars began to disappear in the orange glow. When the idea hit me, I immediately grabbed Edward's hand. I think I surprised him a bit more than I intended, but when I told him my idea, he laughed and lightly squeezed my hand. I think my heart may have skipped a beat at that moment.

He then knelt down and asked me to hop on his back. I'll admit that I thought this was super weird. I hadn't gone on a piggyback ride since I was a little kid and my parents were together. It was just us though, Edward and me. It's not like anyone else was there to watch and judge. I was just being stupidly self conscious. So I shrugged that off and hopped on the back of my vampire boyfriend.

It turned out to be amazing! I keep forgetting how strong Edward is; his skinny-ness is so misleading. He gripped my thighs firmly but delicately and ran with grace over the uneven ground. I almost felt weightless as he navigated the winding forest paths, which lead us further and further uphill. We'd never been this physically close before. I savored the sensation of the movement of his body against mine. Not gonna lie - it was really hot!

Finally, the trees parted and we reached an overlook, high above Castle Cullen. Edward knelt back down to let me off. I would have been disappointed, but the view distracted me. We could see the entire valley below. It stretched on and on for miles, all the way to the dark blue ocean. I watched as the streetlights in Forks started to turn off block by block.

I turned to Edward just as the sun broke through the trees behind us. We were standing in just the right spot for a beam of warm light to cover us both. Then it happened. Just what I'd wanted to see! His skin began to change; it became almost pearl-like - a milky surface reflecting back the sunlight in soft shades of pink and blue and yellow. The colors shimmered and flowed down the curves of his cheeks, his chin, and his neck.

I don't know how long I was staring. Definitely too long. But Edward didn't seem to mind. When he finally spoke, he said he felt safe with me and that he would try to keep me safe, too. I felt the same, but the words didn't come. I don't think they needed to. Then I kissed him.