



Wood

d0tpark3r

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Summary

continuation of Algie's hot mess of a fic. I recommend not reading this at all.
Rated M for mature content.

Chapter 1

A/N: SM owns all, yadda, yadda, yadda. Don't care.

Here is Chapter 2 of Algie's hot mess. For Chapter 1, go see her profile at [.net/~algonquinrt](https://www.deviantart.com/~algonquinrt). I think there is some sort of interlude in between the chapters that was posted for ninapolitan's birthday, but I'm too lazy to look it up.

Here's hoping your eyes don't bleed reading this.

I want to kill Bella. I want to wrap my hands around her long white neck and press until she turns blue, just like Violet Beauregard.

If not for the fact that Alice, my princess, is standing here holding her mother's hand and looking up at her with naked adoration, I'd probably be doing exactly that.

Instead, I'm rolling my eyes, tapping my foot, and answering every one of Bella's fucking questions about the kiddie concert Alice and I attended with monosyllabic replies, hoping she'll get the hint and get the hell out of my house before Carlisle shows up.

Praying she's not paying attention, I slide my phone out of my pocket to check the time. It's 5:57, and I am well and truly fucked. Carlisle is going to be here any second, and Bella is still subjecting me to her grilling.

"So you both had a good time, then?" she asks, as if Alice and I haven't already answered this question eleventy billion times in various forms.

"Uh-huh."

"And your date is supposed to be here at six?"

"Uh-huh."

Wait. What the hell did she just ask me? I can tell by her laughter that she's caught me in something, and I race through a mental backpedal. Shit. She asked me if I had a date.

"Daddy has a boyfriend, Mama! So he'll get some and he won't be grumpy anymore."

I arch an eyebrow at Bella, who's now blushing furiously. I always knew that her over-sharing with Alice would come back to bite her in the ass. She should be thankful it's here with me instead of at school.

"Maybe we should watch our mouth in front of the K-I-D, eh, Bella?"

She's glaring at me, and I'm about to launch into my standard lecture about how Alice is only six and already has a fairly unconventional parental set-up without Bella's incessant need to treat Alice as a friend and not the little princess that she is when the doorbell rings.

"Oh, awesome!" Alice yells. "Mama, you get to meet Daddy's boyfriend."

I react a mere second too late, because Bella beats me to the door, blocking my access with a full body check. I smack into the file cabinet as she opens the door with a beatific smile worthy of any saint. It's a shame that she's the damn Devil Incarnate, proving once again that I must have signed my soul away in blood.

"Hello," she greets Carlisle brightly.

I hear him stutter and smack my palm against my forehead repeatedly. Why didn't I plan for this? I should have given myself at least an hour's worth of padding when it comes to Bella picking up Alice.

"It's nice to see Edward getting out some. Usually it's just him, a stack of porn, and the remote."

"Jesus God Bella with the overshare! Can we not say shit like that in front of the K-I-D?"

I reach for her hair, and give it a hard tug as I yank her away from the door. She yelps and swings her arm to hit me in the nads, but ten years of friendship with Bella have given me lightning fast reflexes. I block her with the door and get a good look at Carlisle.

Holy fucking hell.

Bella manages to nearly knock me down by kicking my knee from behind. I'm distracted due to my extreme ogling. Fuckhot Daddy has completely outdone himself

dressing up for date night. He's wearing skin-tight black jeans, a button-down shirt in a tiny black and white print, and a fucking leather jacket.

Leather. Jacket. It's late fucking August. I swear this man missed his calling. He shouldn't be a pediatrician; he should be a porn producer.

I'm barely holding myself up by hanging onto the door.

"Are you going to ask me in?" he inquires with a smirk.

Bella pushes past me and opens the screen door.

"I think you have a little drool right... there, Edward." She dabs her thumb along my chin and I swear if I could think straight I'd pick her up and toss her out onto the porch. As it is, I'm not sure I remember my own name.

"I'm sorry we haven't been introduced," she says to Carlisle. "I'm Bella, Edward's baby mama."

He laughs, and I want to lick up one side of him and down the fucking other. Why is Bella still here again? Alice! That's it! Alice is still here. Fuck. No licking. Foiled again.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Bella. I'm Carlisle. Your daughter is an absolute delight. I'm sure Edward told you my son and I just moved in across the street?"

Carlisle is one smooth operator. I'd tell him so if I could figure out how to get my brain reattached to my fucking mouth. My mouth. On him. Yes. What are they saying now?

"No, actually, he hasn't told me anything at all. Last I knew, that house was abandoned and Edward was swearing up a storm about the lawn not being cut."

"This is Carlisle," I blurt.

The man in question bites his lip like he's stifling a laugh, but Bella isn't quite as tactful. She's all but rolling around on the floor as she laughs, holding her hand up in surrender.

"We covered that already," Carlisle tells me.

Well, fuck. Leather. Jacket. How's a guy supposed to pay attention to the small

talk?

Bella manages to get her laughter under control, gathering Alice's backpack and shuffling her out the door.

"It was nice meeting you, Carlisle," she offers on her way down the front steps. "Hopefully, Edward will be more coherent the next time we meet."

"Nice meeting you as well," he calls. Alice breaks free for a moment and runs back to give me a hug goodbye before Bella buckles her into her booster seat and leaves.

It's down to just me and Carlisle, and I still haven't let him all the way into the house.

"Dinner?" he asks.

"Shit. Yeah. Come on in while I grab my stuff. Sorry I'm so out of it; Bella and Alice took a while. I should have told you to come a little later. I forget how Bella needs to know every last thing about what Alice did over the weekend."

"Not a problem. I wish Esme was that involved in Jasper's life."

I'm shoving my wallet into my pocket when he says this, and I turn to him. He looks almost sad.

"Do you miss her?"

He looks at me, confused, before he answers. "Hell no, I don't miss her. I just wish that her non-stop My-Ex-Husband-Likes-Men Trampage for the Ages would allow for more time with Jasper."

I gape at him. He sighs.

"She still takes it personally, the fact that I'm gay. Even though she knew going in. I think she thought maybe she could convert me. She's a therapist's dream case if she'd bother to sit down and talk to someone. You're lucky to have a co-parent like Bella."

He must have been asleep watching us just now. Did he not see Bella in action? My confusion must show, because he continues, "No, really. She may annoy you, but it's very easy to see that you are friends and you are both concerned with Alice's welfare. She comes first with both of you."

Funny, but I guess I never saw it that way. I spent more time caught up in how weird our situation was and worrying that we would screw Alice up with the way things are.

"You aren't saying much," he notes.

"You're giving me an awful lot to think about," I reply. "So much, in fact, that you are distracting me from how incredibly hot you are in that leather jacket. I assume you put that on tonight just to torment me during dinner?"

He smirks and cocks one eyebrow.

"Not really, but I have to say I'm not sorry if that's the result."

He gives me one quick kiss—with maybe a touch of tongue—and an ass grab before opening the door for me.

"Shall we?"

He gestures toward his car, parked in his driveway, and I let him open the door for me. Apparently, he's pulling out all the stops tonight. Too bad his seduction was complete the second I opened the door.

Dinner is fucking torture.

I don't mean the food; god knows the man has great taste in restaurants, finding this little hole in the wall that has the most fantastic Italian food I've ever had. How the hell he found this place when I'm the native is baffling, so I ask him.

"Yelp," he answers.

"Like a dog?"

"It's an online thing where you can rate restaurants and the like. You've never seen it?"

"I've lived here my whole life. I never thought of using it."

He grins. "If you had, you'd have found this place before I did."

The man has a point. Of course, about two seconds later I wonder what exactly the point was, because I'm watching him slowly pull a strand of fettucini through his

lips. I'm not sure if it's my overactive libido that thinks everything he does is designed to make my dick hard, but if it's not, the guy is doing a banner fucking job of it. I'm glad that I ordered something simple like gnocchi until my eye-fucking overtakes my ability to direct my fork into my mouth and the damn piece of pasta hits my plate, splattering sauce everywhere.

The worst part is that I don't even notice that I've done it until I hear Carlisle chuckle.

"You don't like the gnocchi?" he asks, gesturing to my barely-touched meal.

I blink a few times before looking at my plate, then back at him.

"No, it's... uh... it's really good. I seem to be a little *distracted* is all."

He laughs again, and signals to our server to bring the check. When she arrives, he asks her to wrap our meals to go.

"We're leaving?" Honestly, I feel like the world's biggest airhead tonight. He must think I'm a complete idiot, and he'd be right, judging by the fact that I can't seem to string two thoughts together.

"I think we're both a little... *distracted*," he replies. Maybe we should take care of that and eat back at your place instead."

My ears perk up when I hear that he wants to head back to my place. I may nearly tip my chair over in my rush to get out of the restaurant and back to his car, but he doesn't laugh at me. He grabs the bag with our leftovers and follows behind me as I hurry out the door and down the short alley toward the lot he parked in.

I'm so focused on getting to the car that he knocks the breath out of me when he drops the leftovers and shoves me into a doorway in the alley. I feel his warm breath on my neck as he aligns his body with mine, pressing me up against the door, marked "Deliveries."

"God, Edward," he grinds out. "How was I supposed to enjoy my fettucini the way you were eye-fucking me all through dinner? Another two seconds of that and I would have dragged you under the table."

I'm stunned. Here I thought I was drooling like a slack-jawed imbecile all through dinner, but I was really getting him all hot and bothered? I don't have much time to think about it, however, because he's grinding against me and nipping at my neck.

"There's no fucking way I'm going to make it home in this condition. No fucking way I can get in that car and drive after watching you look at me like that."

My knees buckle at his words. He really wants me to suck him off in the alley? I'm nothing if not fair, and he *has* been patiently awaiting my reciprocity since Saturday. I start to push him back so I can turn around, but he shoves me back against the door.

"Don't move a fucking muscle until I tell you."

Rawr. Way to take command, Fuckhot Daddy. Trouble is, I can't get my mouth on you in this position.

His mouth is attacking my neck while his hands make short work of his jeans. I hear the clinking of his belt as he unfastens it. Every sound is amplified in the dark alley to the point where I can hear his zipper as he yanks it down. Again, I try to turn, but he returns one hand to my hip, holding me fast.

"I thought I told you not to move."

"But..." I gasp out as his other hand moves to my crotch.

"Stay still."

I enter a fugue state when he unfastens my belt and jeans, his hand snaking in to free my granite-hard cock. What the hell is he doing? He's stroking me hard and fast is what he's doing, and before I know it, he's dropped my pants to my ankles.

"Carlisle? What?"

"Edward, shut up already."

His hands leave me and I hear a crinkling sound. I'm still trying to wrap my head around the idea that I'm in an alley with my pants at my feet when I feel his fingers. He can't really be...

Oh. Oh, yes, he is.

Fuckhot Daddy must have been a Boy Scout, because he's definitely come prepared. One lubed hand returns to my cock as the other directs traffic behind me. Once he's in position, I feel his fingers dig into my hip as he yanks me backward, filling me in one swift move.

We both groan.

"Sshh," he reminds me.

I brace my forearms as he starts to move in me, deep thrusts that nearly knock my head into the door before I get situated. I feel his chest against my back, his breathing coming faster.

"Touch yourself," he orders, moving his hand to my other hip to gain more leverage.

His fingers dig in as he moves faster, and I'm not sure I even need to touch myself. The terror that we'll be caught combined with the relief of three days of text-message foreplay has me ready to go off at any second.

"Edward... fuck..."

Yes, Fuckhot Daddy, you are.

"Gonna... ah..."

He slams into me as he climaxes, and my forehead raps against the door. It's all I need to reach my own, and I moan in relief. I drop my head to rest on my arm while I catch my breath, vaguely registering the sound of Carlisle fastening back up before helping me with my own state of undress. He gently turns me so I'm facing him, and kisses me, an unlikely ending to what we just did.

"Dessert before dinner, I guess," he jokes. Now maybe we can go home and enjoy the pasta.

Chapter 2

A/N: All Twilight characters property Stephenie Meyer. Dear Baby Jesus, if you want to steal the rest, god help you.

Thanks to TwilightMundi for betaing this hot fucking mess. M, you can shut the hell up now. XOXO

Riding home with Carlisle is... awkward, to say the least. It's not like I can really expect a post-coital cuddle after letting him plow me in an alley, but I'm wondering exactly what the fuck I'm doing sitting here in the passenger seat while he sings along with fucking Coldplay and I have our rapidly cooling doggie bags on my lap.

I mean, besides getting laid for the first time in a really long while. Bella's commentary on the topic notwithstanding, I really did need to get some.

Still, I'm all but biting my nails wondering what happens now. Does he drop me off at home with my uneaten dinner and tell me he'll call me later? Do I invite him in? I roll my eyes and resist the urge to bang my head against the window. He's hot. I just got nailed in an alley. I need to be thanking my lucky stars instead of making myself all paranoid wondering which one of our driveways he's going to pull into.

My stupid little pep talk does nothing, however, when we pull into his driveway. Apparently, our date was over at the alley fuck and I'm on my own. I leave the bag with our dinners on the floor, hopping out of the car as fast as I can before I realize my dating ineptitude extends to figuring out what to say now. Thanks for the dinner I didn't eat? For banging me? Bella's right. I need to get out more because I have no fucking clue what I'm supposed to do here.

I shift nervously, waiting for some sign from Fuckhot Daddy. Do I just say "good night" and thank him for dinner?

Fuckhot Daddy is out of the car and holding our leftovers by the end of my self-torture. He cocks an eyebrow and asks, "So are you going to invite me over so we can finish our dinner?"

I stare at him, blinking furiously, confused. He wants to come over? Then why the fuck did he pull in here?

My confusion must be pretty fucking evident by my gaping mouth, because Carlisle understands that he needs to explain, "No need for the neighborhood to see my car in your driveway all night, do you think? Although I can't say I'd be surprised if your buddy Jessica had installed a Web cam to keep track of our comings and goings. I think she fancied herself a bit of a matchmaker with her obvious hints at your sexuality."

Holy fuck.

"Um, uh, yeah... would you... I mean... yeah, come on over. I mean, if you want," I manage to stutter. He chuckles in his all-too-fucking-smooth way and walks around the car to me.

"You look confused," he observes.

"Look, Carlisle," I begin. "I guess, yeah, I am confused here. I'm not going to go all lesbian on you and back up a moving truck tomorrow, but I have no fucking clue what we are doing. For all I know, our 'date' ended in the alley, so you'll have to excuse me if I'm a little out of the loop when it comes to returning back to our joint neighborhood after that. I guess I'm a little out of practice with post-alley-fuck etiquette."

"Why does it have to be complicated?" he asks.

Why, indeed. Maybe because he acts all cool and cocky like James Bond while I act like a teenager stuttering through an oral report in front of the class. I don't like this gap in nonchalance. Yes, that's the problem.

"It really doesn't," I reply. "But I'd like to know what the fuck I'm doing and I *don't*."

"So what about this? In the interest in keeping things uncomplicated, we acknowledge that we're attracted to each other. We can mutually decide to have sex, no strings attached, and always feel free to decline if the other isn't so motivated."

"That sounds pretty fucking clinical."

"It's not meant to be. But I moved in here, what? Less than a week ago. It's not like we are going to be picking out china patterns any time in the near future; we're just getting to know each other. No one should have the upper hand here, and I don't mean to give you the impression that I do. If you want me to come over, ask

me. If you want to go home alone, then wish me a good night and I'll talk to you later. No one has to be offended either way."

"I'm over-thinking this, huh?"

Fuckhot Daddy laughs, "Yeah, a little bit. Want me to come over or not?" He gestures with the bag holding our dinners, which are probably cold and congealed at this point.

"Yeah," I answer. "Come on over. I'll heat the dinners up, so I'm not such a useless date. Do you need to let Sul... er, Jasper know you're back?"

He shakes his head. "He has my cell number; he'll call if he needs me. And if he looks outside, he'll see my car and figure out where I am."

We head across the street to my house, and as I'm opening the door, I realize I have to ask him.

"It doesn't bother you? That he knows you're here, I mean."

He shrugs in reply. "Jasper and I have a fairly laid-back parent-child relationship. He knows I date, and I assume he knows I have sex. There's not a lot you can hide when your child's mother leaves you because you prefer to have sex with men. He knows I'm responsible, and that's about it."

I can't imagine having that kind of conversation with my princess ever, so I let the topic die and take the bag of food from Carlisle, plating it and putting it in the oven to warm.

I turn from the stove and nearly knock him over; he's standing that close.

"Hey," he says, putting his fingers in my belt loops, and pulling me closer. "You don't need to worry about every little thing. When exactly is the last time you dated, anyway?"

He makes it really fucking hard to answer him when he's sucking on my neck like this, so I push him back a little.

"Yeah, about that..." I try to distract him by hunting for a corkscrew so we can open some wine.

"A while?" he asks playfully as I hand him the glass I've just poured.

"You could say that."

"A year?"

"Uh, more like since Alice was born," I confess.

Fuckhot Daddy—Mr. Smooth himself—chokes and spits wine down the front of his shirt. "You haven't gotten laid in six years?" he gasps.

I'm already digging one of those little stain pens out of a cupboard when I answer him. "I didn't say I haven't gotten *laid* in six years. I said I haven't *dated* in six years. There's a difference, you know."

I'm awkwardly wiping the pen over his shirt and thinking this couldn't be much more of a fuck-up if I tried to ruin a date. He's staring at me, and I take a couple of steps back, holding out the pen to him to finish the job.

"Look," I say, running my hands through my hair nervously. "I just... gah. I just don't get out there much, you know? I've met a few guys who might have turned into something, but then they meet Bella and Alice and... well... I'm not willing to cut them out of my life just so I can fit some stereotype, you know?"

He ignores the rapidly-setting stains on his shirt and cocks an eyebrow. "Are you telling me you and Bella made Alice the old-fashioned way?"

I snort out a laugh. "If 'the old-fashioned way' means looking shit up online, me with a porno in my room and Bella waiting outside with a turkey baster, then yes, you could say that."

"So then what's the big deal? It's not like you are going to be leaving some guy for her, right?"

"Yeah, well..." I trail off. "I guess I tend to meet guys who don't want to curtail the whole party scene because I have a six-year-old in tow."

"So I guess I should be asking, if you are meeting guys who can't take off a few weekends a month from clubbing, exactly how 'old' are you, Edward?"

"I'm... uh... thirty," I manage to get out. I watch Carlisle's eyebrow go right back up.

"And Bella is?" He continues his line of questioning.

"Same age. Thirty."

"That seems awfully young to be having babies together with your situations."

Shit, is he judging me? Us? Maybe I should have kept my trap shut and simply enjoyed the sex.

"I know it seems weird," I say, more than a bit defensively. "But Bella was concerned she'd get wrapped up in her career and not take the time to have kids while she could. She thought she'd be better off starting out with a kid and not worry so much about trying to work everything in later. We've been best friends for just about ever, and we're less likely to bail on shit with Alice than a lot of married couples. It's not like we are going to get divorced or anything."

Now it's my turn to give the pointed stare, and Carlisle manages to look disconcerted.

"Touché," he offers, raising his wine glass in a mock toast.

I'm saved from having to work through this awkwardness by the smell of something burning.

"Fuck! Our dinners!"

Sure enough, I open the oven to see our dinners smoking and blackened on the plates. Carlisle appears behind me, chuckling. "Something tells me that we were not destined to eat Italian tonight. Takeout?"

I sigh and offer him the menus from the basket I keep next to the fridge. "Guest's choice. They all deliver."

He laughs again when I tell him I'll pay. It's the least I can do for setting up this clusterfuck of a conversation and then burning the dinner.

x X x

Having Carlisle pick our food and order it manages to distract us from our conversation, and we fill the time waiting for the delivery with small talk. Luckily, the Thai place is only a couple of miles away, and our food arrives within 20 minutes. We head into the living room to eat, forgoing the table in favor of the couch in front of the TV. We're plowing through whatever the hell Carlisle even ordered when I wasn't paying attention, watching one of the countless crime shows on TV,

when he brings us back to our earlier conversation.

"So I guess you've never had a serious boyfriend or anything?"

Putting a question mark on the end of that doesn't really make it a question, but what the hell?

"Not in a long time, no. There was a guy I was with for two years... senior year in college and the year after, but he didn't like how close Bella and I were. I think he felt threatened by her."

"Maybe he was right? I mean, you do have a child together now..." He trails off, leaving his observation wide open, and me just a little pissed off.

I practically vault off the couch, leaving my take-out containers in the center while I pace. I really don't want to shoot off my mouth without counting to ten or something, but as hot as he is, Carlisle doesn't know shit about me, or Bella, or Alice.

"Edward?"

I stop where I'm pacing and face him, taking a deep breath before I answer.

"Don't you get shit, Carlisle? Don't you get crap from guys all the time about how you were in the closet by marrying a woman and all that crap?"

He opens his mouth like he's going to respond, but I don't let him get a word in edgewise before I continue.

"I know you do. I know that you have to. Because gay men are more like catty bitches about that shit than a fucking houseful of actual cats in heat. So why the fuck do you have to do that to me? Have I given you shit about an ex-wife? Or a teenaged son who gives us unsolicited dating advice? No, I have not. I have a female best friend, a great kid with her, and I'm pretty fucking happy that both of us are involved in bringing her up, with no animosity. I don't have to chase her across the country to get her to pay attention to her kid, and she doesn't have to do that for me, either.

"I like you, Carlisle, and fuck knows you are a great lay, even if I haven't had the privilege of fucking you inside a building yet, but I'm not going to apologize for anything. I'm loyal to a fault, and if you want to keep doing whatever it is we're doing here, then you get the benefit of that as well. Right now, though, you are

peeing me the fuck off, and maybe you should take some time to think if you want to deal with my baggage in order to have some great sex."

He nods, leaving his takeout containers next to mine on the couch, and lets himself out without a word. I lock up behind him before I turn and bang my head against the door. Finally, I meet a guy worth going out with more than once and I manage to fuck things up with my temper and defensiveness in less than a week.

Leaving the food on the couch, I walk down the hall to my bedroom and flop on the mattress fully clothed. Hopefully, Bella's new boyfriend is halfway decent. I drag a pillow over my face and yell into it. Fuck this. I mash the pillow under my head, roll over, and close my eyes. Staying awake all night and obsessing over this shit isn't going to help anyone. If Carlisle calls or whatever, then fine. If not, well, I go back to online porn.

Maybe if I keep telling myself that, I'll start to believe it.

Chapter 3

Okay, like, seriously, you guys should thank TwilightMundi for the beta work and also for not telling me until AFTER that I could have ended the fic here, because I am SOOOO tempted. Really. My eyes bleed all over the keyboard writing this. I can't believe you are reading it. Yes, you. This is CARLISLE. Gah.

Characters belong to SM, but I'm pretty sure she doesn't want them back after this fic. I don't claim to want ownership of ANYTHING having to do with this fic.

I got about ten total minutes of sleep. Most of the night I was tossing and turning, only to doze off and wake again a few seconds later completely tied up in the sheets. At quarter after five, I finally give up trying to get any sleep at all and wander into the kitchen for some coffee.

Unfortunately, because apparently the housewife gene skipped me when I got the gay gene, I forgot to get coffee while Alice was with me, and I have no beans to grind. I narrow my eyes at a jar of instant coffee Bella left here after making some kind of fucked-up birthday cake for Alice, but I'm not quite that lazy.

I haul off down the hall to throw some clothes on, grumbling that I'm seriously going to have to go buy my ass some coffee at this ungodly hour. I manage to drive to the store without incident, considering that I'm working on no sleep and no caffeine, and thank god for whatever nutter put a Tim Horton's in my grocery store so I can grab a cup of coffee on my way to buy more coffee.

Whatever. My name is Edward and I'm addicted to coffee.

It isn't until I'm walking to my car, about half an extra-large in with another two pounds of beans in a plastic bag on my wrist that I remember the fiasco that was my date with Carlisle.

Shit.

I get to my car, toss in the beans, and sit with my cup in my lap, banging my head repeatedly on the steering wheel. That date was utter fucking fail.

A quick check of the clock tells me it's twenty after six. Bella should be up having her first cup of coffee. I don't think twice about it, just pull out my phone and dial.

"What stupid move did you pull?" is how she greets me. No "hello." No "how was your date?"

"How do you know I pulled a stupid move? Maybe I'm calling to crow about how fucking amazing it was."

"Because you are calling me at oh-dawn-thirty, dumbass. If your date was amazing, he'd be there and if you were even awake, you'd be going back for seconds, or probably fourths. So what the hell did you do?"

I sigh. Sometimes, I wonder if I wouldn't be better off with friends who don't know me as well as Bella does. I can't lie. I can't get away with anything.

"C'mon Spazzward. Tell me all about how you over-thought everything and didn't get laid."

"I did get laid."

I wait until I hear her choke on her coffee before I roll my eyes. She thinks she knows me sooooo well.

"You got laid and yet you're all freaked out? What the hell? I would have expected something along the lines of a post-fuck fugue state from you."

I put her on speaker and toss the phone into the center console so I can drive and suck down my coffee at the same time.

"I don't know... I mean, the sex was great, but then we got back to the house..."

"Back the truck up, there. Back to the house? Where exactly did you have sex?"

"Inanalley," I mumble.

I hear some more choking before she continues.

"Okay, so you've decided to go back to re-enacting some sort of Studio 54 thing. Whatever. I hope you made sure he wrapped it. Go on with your story."

"Wait, how do you know...? Gah, never mind. I so do not want to know."

"So after that, I was all—you know—typical me. I mean, what is the standard for conversation after you fuck some guy in an alley?

"We get back to the house, and I completely burn dinner trying to reheat it and then we get to talking, only he sort of insinuates that my relationship with you is wrong. Or something."

She makes a humming noise, and I'm not sure if it's agreement or not, so I keep going.

"So then we had sort of an argument and he left."

"He walked out on you?"

I cringe. "Only after I told him he needed to think about whether it was worth getting involved with me and my baggage. I mean, you and Alice aren't going anywhere, so he has to decide if he can live with that."

She waits a beat before she responds.

"Do you think you were reading into what he was saying about me?"

"Jesus, Bella! How many times have we been through this? I know when they're freaked out about things. 'You were awfully young to be having a kid with your hag, you know.'" I sing-song at her. "'Did you fuck her to have the kid? Did you like it?' I know it when I hear it."

"But do you think he really meant it or was it something else? I mean, you said he was married and did the het thing for a while..."

"I don't think he ever thought of himself as straight."

"Shut up and let me finish. I mean, he has a kid of his own. He knows what it's like out there when you have a kid with a woman instead of doing it the old fashioned way, like buying one or finding someone to carry your demon spawn all mixed in a blender."

"Why do you have to be so crass?"

"Because I love you. So hear me out. Maybe he was jealous? That you're younger than he is and seem to have your shit together? Besides dating, though. He got a total eyeful of how that part of your life is *completely* not together."

It's a good thing I'm turning into my driveway when she says this, because I'm stunned. Could she be right?

"Shit. I probably need to talk to him, huh?"

"That's a good bet, Spazzy. Now, unlike you, I have to get to work at a certain time. And drop Alice off. Call me later if you're freaking out again. Oh, and you never did ask about my date, did you?"

That's me, King of Navelgazing.

"I'm sorry. We'll talk later and you can tell me if you let him into the Cave of Wonders."

"More like the Cave of Cobwebs, but we'll discuss the state of my vadge later."

She hangs up without saying goodbye, leaving me with my rapidly cooling coffee and a coffee pot waiting to do its job. So what do I do? Take said coffee and wander down the hallway toward my drafting table so I can watch for any signs of life over at Carlisle's, like the stalker that I am turning out to be.

I take a sip of the now-lukewarm coffee only to splash it down my front when the doorbell rings. I open the door quickly so I can attempt to wipe at least some of the coffee off my shirt, and am floored to see none other than Fuckhot Daddy standing there in a shirt and tie. He stands there silently, leaving me to break the ice, apparently.

"Good morning?" I ask him.

He licks his lips nervously, but still doesn't speak.

"Can I help you with something?"

I'm not really in the mood to be friendly after last night. Even if I was planning on talking to him. I haven't even finished my goddamned coffee yet, and I sure as shit haven't decided what I want to say to him.

Carlisle turns his head and looks off to the side before he speaks.

"I'm... sorry? I'm not happy with the way we left things between us last night," he finally manages to blurt out.

"Yeah, well, me either. Then again, I'm pretty used to guys bitching about a kid and a best friend who's more than just a hag."

He flinches.

"I find that I don't like feeling like a stereotype," he confesses. "I should have been more understanding of your situation, especially seeing as my own is somewhat unconventional."

"That's a lot of fancy speaking there, Carlisle. Why don't we cut to the chase? You spoke your mind last night, got home, realized that pissing me off was going to result in you having to go out and find someone else to scratch your itch, so you figured you'd offer a half-hearted apology to salvage your fuck buddy."

"Did I cover everything?"

"Yes. Wait, no."

I cross my arms and raise one eyebrow. If I said I wasn't enjoying his awkwardness, I'd be lying. It's kind of nice to have the shoe on the other foot for a change.

He runs a finger along the inside of his collar, like his tie has suddenly gotten way too tight.

I don't give an inch. Let him sweat.

"Look, Edward, can I come in for a minute? It's hard enough having this conversation without worrying about the entire neighborhood watching."

Okay, maybe I can give half an inch. I take a step back from the door, allowing him to pass me. I shut the door and walk over to my drafting table, taking a seat while he parks himself on my couch.

"I, um... I'm not very good at this."

"Apologizing?"

"No. Dating. I..."

"Spit it out already, will you, Carlisle? It's obvious you're in a hurry to get to work."

"I'm not."

"You aren't in a hurry?"

"I'm... uh... not going to work."

What kind of game is he playing? The man is obviously dressed for work.

"I thought it would be easier if you believed I was heading for work."

I roll my eyes and sigh in exasperation. Is this guy even capable of saying or doing what he means?

"I'm an ass."

"Now that is the first thing I've heard you say that's true."

He looks hurt at my accusation, and I find myself actually feeling a little guilty.

"I have no idea what to think, Carlisle. I mean, you move in here, put your tongue in my mouth day one, blow me on my kid's play gym on what is essentially day two, carry on some sort of soft-core porn in your front yard when you know I'm watching, show up for our first date like sex on fucking wheels, nail me in a goddamned *alley*, then tell me I'm dysfunctional. I've never been good at the whole fuck 'n duck move; I'll admit it. You are the type of guy I've avoided since Alice was born, and I'm out of practice. Or never had skills in that area to practice in the first place.

"It was probably stupid to even hook up with you in the first place. We're neighbors. You just moved in, and I have no plans to leave this house any time soon. It's bound to be awkward after a quick fuck, and living across the street from each other makes running into each other pretty much inevitable.

"You don't need to apologize. I won't tell the neighbors I fucked you, and you can carry on your business without worrying I'm going to cockblock you if you bring someone home or whatever. Just chalk it up to a mistake, you know? You accidentally fucked a guy who thought maybe you could at least be friends afterward."

"Jesus, will you shut up and let me talk here?" he finally bursts out.

"I fucking like you, Edward. I'm not some goddamned Lothario who bones everything in sight. Maybe I thought that was something that would impress you. I

have no clue what I'm doing at all. You seem so confident and don't give a shit what anybody thinks. You don't *care* if people judge you for your situation. Alice comes first and everyone else can just fuck off."

"Let me get this straight. You were all butched up last night to impress me?"

Jesus, this guy makes me want to bash my head into a wall.

"Yes?"

I huff out a huge sigh.

"How about this? We start the fuck over again. Forget last night ever happened."

"What about the whole swing set thing?"

"Yeah, that I will *not* forget. Gotta have something that's happened in the past five years to think about while I'm spanking it, you know?"

He replies with a nervous chuckle. "So what do we do now?"

"You really don't have to work today?"

"No. I don't start 'til next week."

"What's Sullen doing today?"

"Sullen?"

Shit. That was my out-loud voice, wasn't it?

"Jasper, I mean. What's Jasper doing?"

He laughs, a huge shouting bellow.

"Oh my god. He is pretty sullen, isn't he? I keep hoping he'll outgrow this phase, but it just gets worse. He sits in his room and plays this horrible music and it makes me want to tear my hair out. I managed to get him into some two-day art camp or something through the community rec center just to get him out of his room. I have to drop him off in an hour."

"So your whole day is free?"

"Pretty much, except for dropping him off and picking him up."

"How about if we try the whole date thing again? You go home, try to find something in your closet that you would actually wear—in other words, not dripping sex, soft-core porn costume, or work clothes when you aren't working—drop off Jasper, and then come back here. We'll go get some lunch, try to not fuck in any public locations, and see if we can actually stand each other for an hour or two. Sound good?"

"Sounds... yeah... sounds good."

"And Edward?"

"Yeah?"

"Thanks for giving me a second chance. I'm going to try really fucking hard not to blow it."

With that, he turns and heads back down my front lawn toward his house. I hope when he said he wasn't going to blow it he didn't mean he wasn't planning on blowing me. 'Cause shit, that is one thing the man does *not* fuck up.