new moon



THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER BY

STEPHENIE MEYER

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STEPHENIE MEYER



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Summary: When the Cullens, including her beloved Edward, leave Forks rather than risk revealing that they are vampires, it is almost too much for eighteen-year-old Bella to bear, but she finds solace in her friend Jacob until he is drawn into a "cult" and changes in terrible ways.

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These violent delights have violent ends

And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,

Which, as they kiss, consume.

Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Scene VI

CONTENTS

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1.	PARTY	3
2.	STITCHES	30
3.	THE END	53
4.	WAKING UP	93
5.	CHEATER	120
6.	FRIENDS	137
7.	REPETITION	159
8.	ADRENALINE	181
9.	THIRD WHEEL	201
10.	THE MEADOW	225
11.	CULT	252
12.	INTRUDER	278
13.	KILLER	300
14.	FAMILY	323
15.	PRESSURE	342
16.	PARIS	363
17.	VISITOR	382
18.	THE FUNERAL	404
19.	RACE	424
20.	VOLTERRA	443
21.	VERDICT	462
22.	FLIGHT	485
23.	THE TRUTH	500
24.	VOTE	522
EPI	LOGUE: TREATY	548

PREFACE

I FELT LIKE I WAS TRAPPED IN ONE OF THOSE TERRIFYING nightmares, the one where you have to run, run till your lungs burst, but you can't make your body move fast enough. My legs seemed to move slower and slower as I fought my way through the callous crowd, but the hands on the huge clock tower didn't slow. With relentless, uncaring force, they turned inexorably toward the end—the end of everything.

But this was no dream, and, unlike the nightmare, I wasn't running for *my* life; I was racing to save something infinitely more precious. My own life meant little to me today.

Alice had said there was a good chance we would both

die here. Perhaps the outcome would be different if she weren't trapped by the brilliant sunlight; only I was free to run across this bright, crowded square.

And I couldn't run fast enough.

So it didn't matter to me that we were surrounded by our extraordinarily dangerous enemies. As the clock began to toll out the hour, vibrating under the soles of my sluggish feet, I knew I was too late—and I was glad something bloodthirsty waited in the wings. For in failing at this, I forfeited any desire to live.

The clock tolled again, and the sun beat down from the exact center point of the sky.

1. PARTY

I WAS NINETY-NINE POINT NINE PERCENT SURE I WAS dreaming.

The reasons I was so certain were that, first, I was standing in a bright shaft of sunlight—the kind of blinding clear sun that never shone on my drizzly new hometown in Forks, Washington—and second, I was looking at my Grandma Marie. Gran had been dead for six years now, so that was solid evidence toward the dream theory.

Gran hadn't changed much; her face looked just the same as I remembered it. The skin was soft and withered, bent into a thousand tiny creases that clung gently to the bone underneath. Like a dried apricot, but with a puff of thick white hair standing out in a cloud around it.

Our mouths—hers a wizened pucker—spread into the same surprised half-smile at just the same time. Apparently, she hadn't been expecting to see me, either.

I was about to ask her a question; I had so many—What was she doing here in my dream? What had she been up to in the past six years? Was Pop okay, and had they found each other, wherever they were?—but she opened her mouth when I did, so I stopped to let her go first. She paused, too, and then we both smiled at the little awkwardness.

"Bella?"

It wasn't Gran who called my name, and we both turned to see the addition to our small reunion. I didn't have to look to know who it was; this was a voice I would know anywhere—know, and respond to, whether I was awake or asleep . . . or even dead, I'd bet. The voice I'd walk through fire for—or, less dramatically, slosh every day through the cold and endless rain for.

Edward.

Even though I was always thrilled to see him—conscious or otherwise—and even though I was *almost* positive that I was dreaming, I panicked as Edward walked toward us through the glaring sunlight.

I panicked because Gran didn't know that I was in love with a vampire—nobody knew that—so how was I supposed to explain the fact that the brilliant sunbeams were shattering off his skin into a thousand rainbow shards like he was made of crystal or diamond?

Well, Gran, you might have noticed that my boyfriend glitters. It's just something he does in the sun. Don't worry about it. . . .

What was he *doing*? The whole reason he lived in Forks, the rainiest place in the world, was so that he could be outside in the daytime without exposing his family's secret. Yet here he was, strolling gracefully toward me—with the most beautiful smile on his angel's face—as if I were the only one here.

In that second, I wished that I was not the one exception to his mysterious talent; I usually felt grateful that I was the only person whose thoughts he couldn't hear just as clearly as if they were spoken aloud. But now I wished he could hear me, too, so that he could hear the warning I was screaming in my head.

I shot a panicked glance back at Gran, and saw that it was too late. She was just turning to stare back at me, her eyes as alarmed as mine.

Edward—still smiling so beautifully that my heart felt like it was going to swell up and burst through my chest—put his arm around my shoulder and turned to face my grandmother.

Gran's expression surprised me. Instead of looking horrified, she was staring at me sheepishly, as if waiting for a scolding. And she was standing in such a strange position—one arm held awkwardly away from her body, stretched out and then curled around the air. Like she had her arm around someone I couldn't see, someone invisible . . .

Only then, as I looked at the bigger picture, did I notice the huge gilt frame that enclosed my grandmother's form. Uncomprehending, I raised the hand that wasn't wrapped around Edward's waist and reached out to touch her. She mimicked the movement exactly, mirrored it. But

where our fingers should have met, there was nothing but cold glass . . .

With a dizzying jolt, my dream abruptly became a nightmare.

There was no Gran.

That was me. Me in a mirror. Me—ancient, creased, and withered.

Edward stood beside me, casting no reflection, excruci- atingly lovely and forever seventeen.

He pressed his icy, perfect lips against my wasted cheek. "Happy birthday," he whispered.

I woke with a start—my eyelids popping open wide—and gasped. Dull gray light, the familiar light of an overcast morning, took the place of the blinding sun in my dream.

Just a dream, I told myself. It was only a dream. I took a deep breath, and then jumped again when my alarm went off. The little calendar in the corner of the clock's display informed me that today was September thirteenth.

Only a dream, but prophetic enough in one way, at least. Today was my birthday. I was officially eighteen years old.

I'd been dreading this day for months.

All through the perfect summer—the happiest summer I had ever had, the happiest summer anyone anywhere had ever had, and the rainiest summer in the history of the Olympic Peninsula—this bleak date had lurked in ambush, waiting to spring.

And now that it had hit, it was even worse than I'd feared it would be. I could feel it—I was older. Every day

I got older, but this was different, worse, quantifiable. I was eighteen.

And Edward never would be.

When I went to brush my teeth, I was almost surprised that the face in the mirror hadn't changed. I stared at myself, looking for some sign of impending wrinkles in my ivory skin. The only creases were the ones on my forehead, though, and I knew that if I could manage to relax, they would disappear. I couldn't. My eyebrows stayed lodged in a worried line over my anxious brown eyes.

It was just a dream, I reminded myself again. Just a dream . . . but also my worst nightmare.

I skipped breakfast, in a hurry to get out of the house as quickly as possible. I wasn't entirely able to avoid my dad, and so I had to spend a few minutes acting cheerful. I honestly tried to be excited about the gifts I'd asked him not to get me, but every time I had to smile, it felt like I might start crying.

I struggled to get a grip on myself as I drove to school. The vision of Gran—I would *not* think of it as me—was hard to get out of my head. I couldn't feel anything but despair until I pulled into the familiar parking lot behind Forks High School and spotted Edward leaning motionlessly against his polished silver Volvo, like a marble tribute to some forgotten pagan god of beauty. The dream had not done him justice. And he was waiting there for *me*, just the same as every other day.

Despair momentarily vanished; wonder took its place. Even after half a year with him, I still couldn't believe that I deserved this degree of good fortune. His sister Alice was standing by his side, waiting for me, too.

Of course Edward and Alice weren't really related (in Forks the story was that all the Cullen siblings were adopted by Dr. Carlisle Cullen and his wife, Esme, both plainly too young to have teenage children), but their skin was precisely the same pale shade, their eyes had the same strange golden tint, with the same deep, bruise-like shadows beneath them. Her face, like his, was also startlingly beautiful. To someone in the know—someone like me—these similarities marked them for what they were.

The sight of Alice waiting there—her tawny eyes brilliant with excitement, and a small silver-wrapped square in her hands—made me frown. I'd told Alice I didn't want anything, anything, not gifts or even attention, for my birthday. Obviously, my wishes were being ignored.

I slammed the door of my '53 Chevy truck—a shower of rust specks fluttered down to the wet blacktop—and walked slowly toward where they waited. Alice skipped forward to meet me, her pixie face glowing under her spiky black hair.

"Happy birthday, Bella!"

"Shh!" I hissed, glancing around the lot to make sure no one had heard her. The last thing I wanted was some kind of celebration of the black event.

She ignored me. "Do you want to open your present now or later?" she asked eagerly as we made our way to where Edward still waited.

"No presents," I protested in a mumble.

She finally seemed to process my mood. "Okay . . .

later, then. Did you like the scrapbook your mom sent you? And the camera from Charlie?"

I sighed. Of course she would know what my birthday presents were. Edward wasn't the only member of his family with unusual skills. Alice would have "seen" what my parents were planning as soon as they'd decided that themselves.

"Yeah. They're great."

"I think it's a nice idea. You're only a senior once. Might as well document the experience."

"How many times have you been a senior?"

"That's different."

We reached Edward then, and he held out his hand for mine. I took it eagerly, forgetting, for a moment, my glum mood. His skin was, as always, smooth, hard, and very cold. He gave my fingers a gentle squeeze. I looked into his liquid topaz eyes, and my heart gave a not-quite-sogentle squeeze of its own. Hearing the stutter in my heart-beats, he smiled again.

He lifted his free hand and traced one cool fingertip around the outside of my lips as he spoke. "So, as discussed, I am not allowed to wish you a happy birthday, is that correct?"

"Yes. That is correct." I could never quite mimic the flow of his perfect, formal articulation. It was something that could only be picked up in an earlier century.

"Just checking." He ran his hand through his tousled bronze hair. "You *might* have changed your mind. Most people seem to enjoy things like birthdays and gifts."

Alice laughed, and the sound was all silver, a wind

chime. "Of course you'll enjoy it. Everyone is supposed to be nice to you today and give you your way, Bella. What's the worst that could happen?" She meant it as a rhetorical question.

"Getting older," I answered anyway, and my voice was not as steady as I wanted it to be.

Beside me, Edward's smile tightened into a hard line.

"Eighteen isn't very old," Alice said. "Don't women usually wait till they're twenty-nine to get upset over birthdays?"

"It's older than Edward," I mumbled.

He sighed.

"Technically," she said, keeping her tone light. "Just by one little year, though."

And I supposed . . . if I could be *sure* of the future I wanted, sure that I would get to spend forever with Edward, and Alice and the rest of the Cullens (preferably not as a wrinkled little old lady) . . . then a year or two one direction or the other wouldn't matter to me so much. But Edward was dead set against any future that changed me. Any future that made me like him—that made me immortal, too.

An impasse, he called it.

I couldn't really see Edward's point, to be honest. What was so great about mortality? Being a vampire didn't look like such a terrible thing—not the way the Cullens did it, anyway.

"What time will you be at the house?" Alice continued, changing the subject. From her expression, she was up to exactly the kind of thing I'd been hoping to avoid.

"I didn't know I had plans to be there."

"Oh, be fair, Bella!" she complained. "You aren't going to ruin all our fun like that, are you?"

"I thought my birthday was about what I want."

"I'll get her from Charlie's right after school," Edward told her, ignoring me altogether.

"I have to work," I protested.

"You don't, actually," Alice told me smugly. "I already spoke to Mrs. Newton about it. She's trading your shifts. She said to tell you 'Happy Birthday."

"I—I still can't come over," I stammered, scrambling for an excuse. "I, well, I haven't watched *Romeo and Juliet* yet for English."

Alice snorted. "You have Romeo and Juliet memorized."

"But Mr. Berty said we needed to see it performed to fully appreciate it—that's how Shakespeare intended it to be presented."

Edward rolled his eyes.

"You've already seen the movie," Alice accused.

"But not the nineteen-sixties version. Mr. Berty said it was the best."

Finally, Alice lost the smug smile and glared at me. "This can be easy, or this can be hard, Bella, but one way or the other—"

Edward interrupted her threat. "Relax, Alice. If Bella wants to watch a movie, then she can. It's her birthday."

"So there," I added.

"I'll bring her over around seven," he continued. "That will give you more time to set up."

Alice's laughter chimed again. "Sounds good. See you tonight, Bella! It'll be fun, you'll see." She grinned—the

wide smile exposed all her perfect, glistening teeth—then pecked me on the cheek and danced off toward her first class before I could respond.

"Edward, please—" I started to beg, but he pressed one cool finger to my lips.

"Let's discuss it later. We're going to be late for class."

No one bothered to stare at us as we took our usual seats in the back of the classroom (we had almost every class together now—it was amazing the favors Edward could get the female administrators to do for him). Edward and I had been together too long now to be an object of gossip anymore. Even Mike Newton didn't bother to give me the glum stare that used to make me feel a little guilty. He smiled now instead, and I was glad he seemed to have accepted that we could only be friends. Mike had changed over the summer—his face had lost some of the roundness, making his cheekbones more prominent, and he was wearing his pale blond hair a new way; instead of bristly, it was longer and gelled into a carefully casual disarray. It was easy to see where his inspiration came from—but Edward's look wasn't something that could be achieved through imitation.

As the day progressed, I considered ways to get out of whatever was going down at the Cullen house tonight. It would be bad enough to have to celebrate when I was in the mood to mourn. But, worse than that, this was sure to involve attention and gifts.

Attention is never a good thing, as any other accidentprone klutz would agree. No one wants a spotlight when they're likely to fall on their face.

And I'd very pointedly asked-well, ordered really-