

Left to Ashes

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Edited by Rilbur, & Winter

June, 2009

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Chapter Two – The Fairy Godmother

My Aunt who?!? For all of my recollection, I could not once remember someone mentioning an Aunt. I would remember someone like that. “I’m sorry, lady. I don’t have an Aunt Susan.”

“Keenan, you do. The family doesn’t like to talk about it because I’m a lesbian. But I am your Aunt, and I live here in London. You should have gotten the American Express card by now. Your father called me. He told me about your date with Emmett Cullen.”

I raised an eyebrow or two. “It’s not a date!” I insisted. “It’s just a halloween party!”

“Young 17 year old men need to go to these type of things. So you are to rent a costume on that card, and rent a limo or some sort of fancy transportation. Don’t worry about the cost, consider it a gift for not being able to spoil you for 17 years. Then go and have a good time!”

I was speechless. Some unknown Aunt had sent me a credit card that most people would drool over, and told me I could spend whatever I wanted to on a party I had been invited to by Emmett Cullen!

“Uh... um... um...” I was at a loss of how to reply to her. She had just been so generous, and I had no idea how to reply.

“Keenan, dear. Keep the card, and use it when you need to. I trust you not to abuse it. I have e-mailed you my phone number, keep it handy just in case. And have fun at the party! Good evening.”

She hung up.

I just sat there, speechless. Diane came in shortly after, and noticed me just sitting there, as if I was dumb.

“Did you get your homework done?” she asked.

I jumped out of my seat, and ran back upstairs. I had to have my homework done before dinner, or I was grounded for the rest of the evening. And I needed that time to find a costume and to rent a limo.

I managed to get my homework done pretty quickly. When you have incentive, it's easy to finish it. So it was done, and I pulled out the phone book. It was still before 5 pm.

First I called a few limo companies. I know Aunt Susan said limo, but I felt that too extravagant for just one person. So I rented a town car. It comes with a driver who is snazzily dressed, and so forth. Then I called a few costume rental places. I rented a nice tux ensemble, that came with a mask and the outfit looked like the Phantom from *Phantom of the Opera*.

By the time I was finished everything, it was time for dinner. The party at the Cullen's place was two days away. So I made my way downstairs, and ate supper in relative peace while everyone's mouth was moving.

“I know you girls are going to the party on Saturday. I hope you'll have a good time. I'm going to be out with my buddies.” Cameron explained to my step sisters, or tweedle dee and tweedle dumb.

“Just don't damage the car, and absolutely no drinking and driving!” Cameron had this way of getting his point across. He raised his voice just slightly enough so you knew he wasn't screwing around. He looked over to me now. “And you young man. I expect the floors to be swept and the entire house cleaned on Saturday. Since I legally have to allow you to go to school, Saturday is the only day you can do it. Since none of us will be home, there's no excuse not to do it!”

Crap! How would I be able to clean the entire house, and go to the party? It was a big job. After dinner I told Cameron I had to go and do a report. For once no one came into the laundry room, so I wrote down my Aunt's phone number from her e-mail, and I sent her an e-mail telling her about the cleaning directive. Once I was done, I logged off and set off to read my book.

Friday blew past, and nothing else important happened before Saturday.

My ride for the party was scheduled to pick me up for 8 pm. The party started at 7:30, but as my step sister's would squeal, it's good to be fashionably late. With my step father gone all day fishing and then drinking, my step sisters went to over to a friend's place for the day. They were going directly from there.

So once I donned my costume, I only had a few minutes to wait for the driver to get to my place. I had done my best with cleaning, but I needed time to get ready. I just hoped Cameron wouldn't notice.

We drove out of the city, to the countryside not far from London. About 20 minutes after we had left we were pulling up to a large house. It wasn't exactly a mansion, but you sure could have fooled me.

After the driver opened my door, I made my way up to the door. A young lady of about the age of 30 answered, and invited me in. She was dressed up as Cruella DeVille from *101 Dalmations*. It consisted of a half black half pink wig, a long black dress with a polka dotted (black and white) trim, and black nylons. On her feet were a pair of black high heels.

"Hello, you must be Keenan. Emmett told us about you. I'm Esme Cullen."

I shook Esme's hand and blushed a little. "I hope he said only good things. It's a pleasure to meet you, Mrs. Cullen."

Esme just waved it away. "Please, call me Esme."

I noticed that Esme had the same pale look the rest of her family had. Just after she had invited me in, a few other guests had arrived. A young man of about my age was dressed up as victorian era Coachmen with a long red coat that had black buttons, and black mask and hat. His girlfriend was dressed up like a fine lady with a full ball gown.

She escorted myself and a few other attendees to a large patio out back. There were white Christmas lights up, and the area was well lit. The patio was crawling full of various students who had been invited. It was a well attended party.

The Cullen's had hired a band. I made my way over to where I thought Emmett might be, and sure enough he was there talking to his brother Edward. I turned, not wanting to interrupt. Instead I sampled some of the food. It wasn't bad.

Emmett had been dressed up as Aladdin with black pants, no shirt showing off his pale skin, and a red vest with a black mask, and Edward was here as President Lincoln. Bella was seen as dressed up as Mrs. Lincoln. Alice and Jasper were dressed up as Prince Charming and Cinderella.

At about 9 pm, Emmett finally sauntered over. I don't think he recognized me, but he asked me to dance with him. I graciously accepted and the two of us stepped out onto the dance floor. My hands were gently around his cold back as we danced close. For some reason it was just the two of us on the dance floor for something like 45 minutes. The final dance ended with a kiss I will never forget. I could feel the coldness of his lips on mine. It seemed unreal.

Finally getting some air, I went back over to the food table, and this time Emmett followed me. We didn't say anything, his cold hand simply remained on my hand on which I had a white

glove.

I lost track of time just sitting next to Emmett with his arm around me, and I never felt the need to say anything. Finally I noticed my step sister's getting ready to leave the party. If they left now, they'd know I wasn't home.

I stood in horror, and just ran out of the party. Finding myself in the front yard, I found the driver and I had him take me home right away. I barely got into my bedroom before my step sister's pulled up to the house. I hung up my costume and cleaned everything up that I had to. The costume place was open tomorrow, so I'd be able to take the bus to return it.

My step sister's found me working on an "assignment" in the laundry room when Karen decided to "check up" on me. She didn't lallygag so I didn't have to hide my e-mail from her. Aunt Cathy said that while I was out, since I had told her where the spare key was, someone had come to do the cleaning.

Whew.

Cameron got home around 2 am, or so I'd thought. I had stayed awake, laying in bed thinking about Emmett, and the time we had spent together. I also wondered why his hand and back were so cold. But then in London, Ontario it was frequently overcast, but even still, his was a cold I'd never felt before.

On Sunday I returned my costume to the rental place. I told Cameron and my step sister's that I had an errand I had to run for school. I hated to lie, but I had no freedom. To me it was simply intolerable.

I thought of taking a cab, but I didn't want to abuse my new Aunt's trust. I couldn't afford a cab, so the bus would have to do.

For October in Canada, it was still fairly nice out. I was wearing a jacket with a long-sleeved shirt and a pair of jeans. So after I returned my costume, I found a coffee shop nearby. I spent hours there reading all of *Romeo and Juliet* for class.

I was lost in thought sipping a cup of tea when of all people Bella Cullen came in. She came over and smiled at me. "Hey, Keenan right?"

I looked up at Bella and nodded. "Uh, yeah. Bella?"

She nodded. She looked perfect. Long, curly brown hair with perfect eyes and a trim figure. She had the same pale look that Emmett had. "Did you manage to come to the party last night?"

I nodded. "Yeah, it was a lot of fun."

"Emmett was sorry he didn't see you there."

I blinked. What? I had spent almost my entire time with Emmett. “What are you...”

“Oh, sorry, I gotta go.” Bella interrupted. “Edward's waiting in the car. I'll see you at school tomorrow! You should sit with us at lunch!”

With those last few words, Bella had left the coffee shop. I wondered why she had come in here in the first place. I looked out and saw her get into the car. Alice and Jasper were in the car from what I could see as well.

Strange, very strange.

Now that I had finished my book, I finished my tea quickly. I caught the next bus home, and made it there before anyone had returned from their Sunday activities. So I just took out another book, and read it on the porch.

The next morning at school, Emmett again greeted me at the south entrance as he had done both Thursday and Friday of last week. I blinked, but kept walking as he flanked me. “Is there something you want, Emmett?”

I turned to look at the young man with the pale skin and the football player build.

“I wanted to say I'm sorry.” Emmett finally managed to say.

“What? Why are you sorry?” I'm sure my face showed my confusion over Emmet's words.

“I... I still want to be friends, but... I met someone.”

“What's his name?”

“That's the thing.” Emmett looked at the floor. “I don't know. We met at the party on Saturday!”

I looked at the floor, feeling foolish now. “Oh, I... I see.”

He put his hand on my shoulder. “I still want to go bowling on Wednesday. I don't even know his name. He left the party pretty quickly. Maybe you can help me find him?”

I just looked up at him, and silently nodded. My heart was crushed. I knew I shouldn't have gotten my hopes up. He obviously met someone after I had left. It was too good to be true.

“I... I gotta get to class.” I turned and just walked away. I didn't want him to see my tears. I was afraid he'd meet someone else at the party. If only I could have stayed longer. Damn it, Cameron! You asshole!

Now I really wished that Maria was here right now. She always had the right words to say. Instead I skipped class, and spent my time in the bathroom crying.

When I got home from school, I felt too depressed to do any homework. I was lucky since I

was ahead in all of my classes anyway. So I just laid on my bed and cried some more. Sometime around 5 pm Cameron came home.

I could hear his loud thumping come up the stairs, and then my bedroom door flew open. He demanded in his usual slightly-elevated don't-screw-with-me voice, "Where were you this morning?"

Oh shit.