

Left to Ashes

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Chapter Three - No Hiding Place

I had a dream while I was out. I was running across a large field. It was very sunny, and in the middle of the field was Emmett Cullen. He sparkled like diamonds. He was absolutely stunning. When I reached him, he held me in his cold arms which was a relief in the hot sun.

When I awoke, I found myself in a hospital room. There were two other beds across from me, and I could hear the beep of the heart monitor. I didn't have the energy or strength to open my eyes.

"Don't strain yourself. If you can't open your eyes, you don't have to." a deep male voice I didn't recognize said.

I tried to reply, but my throat felt scratchy. But then I finally was able to get out a few words. "Who... who are... you?"

"I'm Dr. Cullen. You're at St. Joseph's Hospital. Your sister Denise called 911 and you were brought here." What? I didn't have a sister named Denise.

"You... you must... mean... step... Diane."

I opened my eyes a little to see the pale Dr. Cullen looking down at a palm pilot. "Oh yes, your step sister Diane. My mistake. I want you to rest, you were beaten up pretty badly. You have a couple of visitors. But I don't want you talking if it's going to cause your heart rate to jump."

I just nodded a little, and went back to sleep.

When I awoke, I was able to easily open my eyes this time, and my throat felt a lot better. The clock on the wall said it was five o'clock. I looked over to my bedside, and in one chair was a seventeen year old male, with a pale complexion, and the build of a football player. It was Emmett Cullen.

In the other chair was a lady around the age of 40. She had shoulder length brown hair, and was wearing a blue skirt suit. She looked handsome enough. I didn't recognize her though. Both of them were reading books, and whispering to each other on occasion about me.

"When are you planning to tell him, *Cullen*?"

"In the fullness of time, *Facinelli*."

It was like there was some sort of feud between the Cullen's and my Mom's family. Facinelli was her maiden name. But I didn't understand why. I could only guess that this lady was probably my Aunt Susan. I had never seen her before, and Emmett clearly called her *Facinelli*.

"What are... what are you two... arguing... about?" I managed to whisper. I had to take a breath as I was still pretty injured, and was being given oxygen through my nose.

Emmett got out of his chair, and came over to my side. "Nothing you need to worry about, Keenan. Just relax, we'll be here when you're ready to talk."

Emmett re-took his seat, and the lady came over to my side. "Keenan, I'm your Aunt Susan. Mr. Cullen is right. Just rest, I may have go soon, but I'll be back. Know that you are safe here, and I won't let anything happen to you."

Happen to me? What? I suppose I hadn't yet had a chance to wonder why I was in the hospital in the first place. "Wha... what? What... happened to... me?" Didn't Dr. Cullen say something about a beating?

Aunt Susan, Emmett, and Dr. Cullen who had come back in all exchanged worried glances. But then Dr. Cullen came up to the other side of my bed. "Keenan, you were badly injured. About a week ago your step sister Diane called 911 after you were brutally beaten by your step father. You've had two surgeries since. The Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex got a protective order, and removed you from his custody. Your Aunt is now your guardian, and your step father was arrested."

My mind couldn't process the information, so I promptly went back to sleep.

When I awoke again, it was dark in the room. The lights in the hall were off as you would find in a hospital after hours. So I gathered it was around midnight or so. When I looked over to the window, I found Emmett looking back at me.

"Don't you need to be sleeping?" I whispered. "So you can find... the guy?"

Emmett just shook his head. "No fun without a friend. Carlisle said you can go home tomorrow."

I felt the pain of depression as Emmett said that. "... I don't have a home" I whispered.

His cold hand found mine, and he gave it a squeeze. "Your Aunt will be back in the morning to take you to her place."

I took my hand out of his. "... I don't want to be a bother. I could just go and stay with..." I had no idea if my Aunt had a family of her own. I really was imposing on people. "I'm sorry. I don't want to put her family out."

Emmett simply smiled. "I doubt it's a problem, or she wouldn't be your Guardian."

I found myself in the back of a limo alone, being taken to my Aunt's house. She was at work, but had sent someone to come and get me. I had no idea what it was she did. We pulled up to a house that seemed to be as big as the one the Cullen's owned. Once we did, the driver came over, and opened the door for me. A young man of about 16 was there in a t-shirt and blue jeans. He helped me into the house, while the driver carried in the items I had from the hospital.

The young man called himself Dallas, and apparently he's my cousin. This story just kept on getting stranger, and stranger. First an Aunt I'd never met, now a cousin. I thought my Aunt had said she's a lesbian?

Dallas helped me up to the second floor, and to my new bedroom. In it was all the stuff from my old bedroom. I guess my Aunt had gone to my old place, and since my step father was in jail, got my clothes and other personal items. I even had my picture of Mom right on my desk. On my desk was also a brand new Macbook Pro. "That's not for me, is it? We share the computer?"

Dallas just looked at me kind of funny. "Why would we share a laptop? I take mine every day to school. I go to a private school about half an hour away from here."

I blinked and just starred at my cousin. "So your Mom just decided to buy me a Mac?"

Dallas shrugged. "She gave you an Amex, didn't she? Why does this really surprise you?"

I just sat down on the queen sized bed, another luxury I wasn't used to, and starred at the floor. "With my step father, I had to use the 'family' computer in the laundry room, but I was the only one who had to use it. And my bedroom was the size of a..."

My cousin put his hand on my shoulder. "I know. I helped to go and get your stuff. If it helps, Aunt Maria is going to come by in a few days for a visit."

I blinked and looked at him. "Really? My Mom, Maria is coming here?" I looked at the floor again. "But I've been a bad son. I haven't been to see her at the hospital since Cameron had

her committed.”

Dallas looked like a deer caught in headlights. “Um... she wasn't committed.”

Emmett Cullen came over after dinner, and despite my limited mobility we went out for a little bit. He took me back to the coffee shop where Bella had found me. I had a white hot chocolate while he insisted he wasn't thirsty.

“So I saw him, I think. At school. Oh, I have your homework for you. Don't worry, I plan to help you get caught up.” Emmett smiled a little.

“Who did you see and what does he look like?” I just started into my drink.

“The guy! From the party! I think his name is Dale.”

I just nodded. “Let me know if you get a date with him. And thanks, I appreciate your help with my school work. Dallas my cousin seems more like a jock than... he reminds me an awful lot of you. Strange Emmett. Why is it your skin is so cold?”

Emmett just looked around a little. “I have a lower body temperature.”

I narrowed my eyes at him, “Why do you have a lower body temperature?”

“I...” Emmett shifted in his seat a little. “I don't think this is a discussion we should have here.”

We went for a long drive around London in his fancy sports car. It was a Ford Mustang convertible, but the weather had turned colder, so the hood was up. Emmett seemed to like to drive really fast. I didn't know if this was a jock thing, or an Emmett thing.

“So, are you going to tell me? Your skin is cold, I've never seen you eat or drink anything, and the days you miss school to go on your 'camping trips' is pretty suspicious.” I narrowed my eyes at him. “Very strange if you ask me.”

“You remind me of *Sailor Moon*.” Emmett announced.

I blinked. “Who?”

“*Sailor Moon*. It was a TV show on during the early 1990's. Anime. Serena, the alter ego of Ms. Moon was always very suspicious.”

“Emmett Cullen. You couldn't have seen that show. You weren't born until 1992 like I was.”

Emmett sighed. “Emmett, how old are you?”

“I'm 17 just like you deduced.”

“How long have you been 17?”

Emmett just looked at me. “What?”

“How long have you been 17?” I thought the question was pretty straight forward.

He whispered, “A long time. 80 years.”

I starred at him for a few moments, and then looked at the road ahead. “I know what you are.”

Emmett just remained quiet while we drove really fast. “A vampire.”

Emmett just nodded, he looked really guilty. Why, I wasn't sure. But he didn't look well at all. “Emmett, please say something.”

“I'm sorry, Keenan.” He whispered. “I wanted a normal friend so badly that I didn't want to tell you. I couldn't actually tell you anyway. It's one of the few laws we live by.”

I put my hand on his. “I know now, and that's all that is important.”

“No, there are more important things in your life than that. I will advise you this, and I urge you to heed my words. Ignorance is bliss. Once the door opens, the tide will affect you more than you know now. I will be here for you, my friend but don't ask me something you don't really want to know the answer to.”

I looked at the speedometer and saw he was going 180 km/h. “Uh... Emmett, is it just you, or do all vampires drive this fast?”

Emmett smiled for the first time in the last few minutes. “It's my family. We're all speed demons. Well, except for Bella. She's the newest vampire. She drives pretty normally.”

I shifted a little. “How long has Bella been... one of you?” I had no idea what Emmett's definition of 'newest' was.

“Only for 6 years. Renesmee is her and Edward's daughter. Not my girlfriend. I just get to play Uncle.”

I blinked, and blinked again. “She looks awfully old for being their...” What? Did he really say what I thought he had?

“Apparently vampire-human children grow really fast, and stop aging at 17. She can eat food, or drink blood. Quite an interesting child.”

“Yeah, I'd say so.” What does someone say to something like that? “Emmett, are you gay?”

“No” was the only reply, and the last word Emmett spoke for the remainder of the ride.

Justine came over with Emmett, it was Friday night, and I was being allowed by Dr. Cullen to return to school on Monday. He thought I should be up to it by then.

I looked over to Justine. "Um, thanks for visiting." We were in my Aunt's large family room, and it was quiet, also sort of awkward though there was no apparent cause. "Any luck with your... friend, Emmett?"

Emmett just shook his head. "No, it turns out they weren't the right person. My mistake."

"So how's your gang?" I asked of Justine, feeling the need to be polite.

"They're all fine. They all miss you and want you to hurry back to school." Justine politely explained.

I laughed out very loudly. "Yeah, right" I said sarcastically. "I never say anything. I doubt they even know I'm alive."

Justine shrugged and said, "That's not true. Some of them know you a little, they want to know you better but you need to open up, Keenan. Live a little."

I nodded a little, "I... I'll try." I looked over to Emmett, "So how's your special diet going?"

Justine now looked to Emmett. "Oh, you have a special diet too? I have to watch my salt intake."

Emmett glared at me a little. "It's nothing that particular, but I have to be cautious."

I grinned. "Don't cross Emmett with food, he tends to get a little... bitey." I gave an exaggerated demonstration of teeth going together.

Both Justine and Emmett just sighed, "That's bad, Keenan, even for you." Justine said in Emmett's defense. I doubt she knew his *secret identity*.