”Maybe you are serious after all. That was a pretty good workout today,” the instructor said as he helped Gavin put the barbell back in place on the bench press.

“You had your doubts?” Gavin smiled as he sat up.

“…It’s not every day we get pop-stars in here who wants to start training Muay Thai,” he shrugged.

Gavin nodded, “How much weight was on that barbell?” He asked while wiping some sweat off his brow with a towel.

“200lbs. I must say I’m impressed, I thought it would be too much for you. You’re definitely stronger than you look, but you still need to work on your muscle mass a bit.”

“I know, I’ve always had a hard time gaining weight… or anything though.”

“Well, you did good today at least,” the burly instructor nodded.

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“…I wonder if this is a good idea…” Gavin mumbled to himself as he logged on to his game.

**[8:43]>>Crudella Espheria: Hey! Morning!**

**[8:43]Zaeon Contala>> ZAE! Wb, how was super-early-training?**

**[8:43]>>Crudella Espheria: Pretty nice. Say, you told me you lived near SF, right?**

**[8:43]Zaeon Contala>> Yeah, Cottonwood. Why?**

**[8:44]>>Crudella Espheria: Well, we’ve known each other now for a few years and all, and I could really use a friend to talk to… like face to face.**

**[8:44]Zaeon Contala>> ZAE! Are you coming on to me? ;D**

**[8:44]>>Crudella Espheria: Haha! Well, not like that perhaps =P I just want someone I can you know… confide in. Plus, I could really REALLY use a pair of extra eyes today. I was thinking of heading out to Mendocino park and do some training there.**

**[8:44]Zaeon Contala>> I thought you just came back from training.**

**[8:45]>>Crudella Espheria: I need some more! XD**

**[8:45]Zaeon Contala>> You realize this sounds super-creepy, right? You could be some fat murderer who’s gonna kill me in the forest!**

**[8:45]>>Crudella Espheria: Haha! Fair enough, how about we meet somewhere in public first then. I’ll buy you lunch and you can decide yourself if you wanna come along with me.**

**[8:46]Zaeon Contala>> You wanna do it today?**

**[8:46]>>Crudella Espheria: You busy?**

**[8:46]Zaeon Contala>> Nah… well…. Um. How about we meet at Westgate Shopping Centre. It’s in Woodland. There’s a sushi place there called “Sushi Boat”. Say at… noon? Can you make it there by then?**

**[8:46]>>Crudella Espheria: Yeah, no biggie. How will I know what you look like?**

**[8:46]Zaeon Contala>> Ummm…. I’ll wear a white Kitty hat! And I have dyed long pink hair! ^^**

**[8:46]>>Crudella Espheria: Right! I’ll see ya then! I should probably get ready or I won’t make it XD**

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A little nervous, Gavin entered the mall and made his way in to the sushi restaurant. It was pretty full, and he could see some of the guests looking at who it was that entered. From behind he saw someone sitting in a white kitty-hat, looking in to a menu. He slowly walked up to her.

“Crudella?” He asked carefully.

She quickly turned around with a big smile on her face. “ZAEOoo—“ as she recognized her idol her jaw dropped and she just stared at him through her thin glasses.

“Hi…!” he smiled as she tried to utter a reply.

“H-h-h-h---“ she quickly turned redder and redder before her eyes rolled back and she fainted.

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“Are you sure you’re ok?” Gavin asked as his game-buddy gulped down yet another glass of water the waiter had brought her.

She nodded, “I-I-I-I-I’m ok!! I’m ok!! Oooooh my good, I’m so embarrassed!!” she whined as she could feel her cheeks burn.

Gavin smiled at her and held out his hand, “We never properly introduced did we? I’m Gavin.”

“B-B-B-Bella! And I hate Twilight!! Ooooh, why did I say that…?” she mumbled, bonking her own head and adjusting her glasses.

Gavin looked at the girl before him, she was rather tiny. Actually shorter than himself, and had a round cute face as well.

“Well it’s nice to---“

“I’m eighteen years old and I love watching sci-fi movies!!” she blurted out but quickly bit her tongue, “Sorry…”

“Don’t worry about it,” he chuckled as the waiter brought them their food.

“S-so wh-who are you again? I MEAN OF COURSE I KNOW!! Oooh, why did I say that…?” Bella mumbled as she nervously nibbled the napkin.

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“Oooh, I’ve never ridden a bike before!” Bella mumbled as she pulled the helmet off her head and put her glasses back on.

Gavin had stopped in the middle of the forest near an outcropping of huge rocks.

“It’s just a rental, a bike is just easier to take out here to the woods.”

“Haha… yeah,” she smiled a little. She had calmed down considerably since the restaurant. Sitting behind Gavin on the bike and hugging him for over two hours also helped, “Why do you have to do this out here? I mean… isn’t a normal gym better? You have everything you need there right?”

“It doesn’t work for me. I came here because I wanted a challenge. After training today I just felt sort of… pumped up! I want to test my limits. I never have before.”

“Um, ok…” she tried to casually lean against a tree but failed miserably as she stumbled and almost fell over. “W-well! Then what do you want me here for? You said you needed and extra pair of eyes?”

Gavin nodded, “I want you to keep an eye out for people, I don’t want anyone to see what I’m doing. Well, except you now obviously.” He walked up to her and looked in to her eyes, “Please, this will be our secret. I can trust you, right?”

She blushed, “Of course you can! I won’t tell a soul! I promise!! But… you’re not going to do anything illegal… a-are you?”

“No, of course not! Well… sort of. I mean, maybe a tree will bite the dust…”

“A tree…?”

“Yeah… like this one, do you see anyone around?” Gavin asked as he walked up to an oak tree, perhaps around 40ft high.

She giggled as she turned around to see, “What are you going to do? Uproot it with your bare hands? I don’t see anyone around.”

Gavin ran his hand over the rough trunk of the tree before grabbing a hold of it with his one hand, sinking his fingers in to the trunk the wood caved in and with the flick of a wrist the entire tree was ripped from the ground, the entire ground quaking as the roots were exposed.

“Sort of yeah!” Gavin smiled as he waved the tree carelessly over his head before turning around to Bella. Only to see her faint right before him again.

“Oh shit!” Gavin quickly dropped the tree and hurried over to Bella. He sat her up against an old stump and shook her gently, “Bella!”

“Umm… wh-whaaat?” she slowly opened her eyes.

“You fainted again.”

She removed her glasses and rubbed her eyes, “W-well what did you expect me to do? You can just rip trees out of the ground like that on someone…” she mumbled.

He smiled, “Sorry. But, you sorta understand why I don’t want people to know about it, right?”

She nodded, “I get it… So, how strong are you?”

He shrugged, “I don’t know, that’s why you’re here. Because I really want to find out!”

“Why me…? Or do you get a kick out of showing off to fangirls?” she asked as he helped her stand

Gavin smiled, “You’re the closest thing to a friend I have. You live fairly nearby. And I didn’t even know you were a fan before you spilled the beans about that pillow.”

“Th-the pillow…” she turned beet red again, “S-sorry…”

“Eh… it’s fine. At least you’re a cute girl, right? And not some fat murderer!” he grinned.

“So… what else can we have you do?” she looked around and saw the outcropping of rocks nearby, one of them. A huge granite slab protruded from the ground like a monolith, “How about that? Can you knock it over?”

Gavin looked at the rock and nodded, “I’ll try!”

Rubbing his hands together he charged the rock like a football player and tackled it head on. He slammed HARD in to the rock and it cracked, but remained in place. Pushing on it as hard he could the monolithic slab started to give in and finally toppled over and fell with an ear-deafening sound, breaking in to three pieces as it hit the ground.

“Wow! That’s amazing! You’re like Superman!” Bella exclaimed as she skipped over to Gavin who was sitting on his knees, panting heavily, “Um… are you… ok?”

Leaning back, Gavin let out a perspired sigh, “I feel great! That was so fun! I’ve never had to exert myself like that before. Also, I’m not Superman.” He smiled to Bella.

“You can lift these too, right?” Bella asked as she stepped on one of slabs that Gavin just felled.

“Probably.”

“You know… I always knew it was true,” she smiled and sat down on the stone.

“What was?” he asked as he stood up.

“That car accident. I figured the rumors were true!”

“Oh… that. Yeah, they were. I mean… I couldn’t just stand by and watch. She might have died.”

“You really are a hero, aren’t you?” she said admiringly.

“I try to help people. But it’s not like I go looking for it or anything,” he said as he knelt down by the slab where Bella was sitting.

With a slight, grunt he lifted the slab off the ground with Bella on it. She let out a surprised giggle as he held the slab suspended in mid-air in front of him.

“Why don’t you have any friends?”

“Trust issues I guess. I feel like most just want to get close to me because I’m famous.”

“And I’m not?”

“You knew me before. You might be ‘glamoured’ by it now but everything we’ve talked about in-game is from the heart. I never lied to you or anyone, I just… withhold certain things.”

“When I was in high-school my classmates always teased me because my name is Bella! They all were like, ooooh!!! She must love vampires. ‘Oh look Bella, it’s Edward!’,” she frowned. “Terrible movies, books are even worse. That’s why my nick is Crudella… because it’s better than Turdella,” she grinned.

“Yeah… I’m… definitely not a fan either… Terrible acting.”

“You’re much better! And that is not sucking up! It’s true,” she smirked, “Then again, I guess it’s hard to be worse.”

“Oh really now?” Gavin laughed.

Bella leaned back, cackling with glee. Gavin shifted his weight a bit and held the slab with one hand, tilting it so the girl on top slid down in to his arms. Dropping the block of granite he gently sat her down on the ground.

“Funny, very funny.” Gavin snickered, “You’re much like the Crudella I know now.”

She smiled, adjusting her glasses, “You told me yesterday you’re gonna be offline a few days. What’s up?”

“Ah, my agent is sending me off to Siberia in two days, some private concert thing I guess.”

“Mmm I see. When will you be back?”

“Dunno, in a couple of days at most. Tell the guild I’m sorry I’ll miss the raids again.”

“I will, don’t worry!” She looked admiringly at Gavin.

“…what?”

“You’re hard not to like.”

“Thanks?” he smirked, “Are you still gonna go home and jerk off to my life-size pillow when I drop you off?”

“N-no! Don’t be silly!!” she exclaimed while blushing, smacking his shoulder hard, “Oh! I’m sorry, it didn’t hurt did it?”

“No, you’d have to hit quite a lot of bit harder than that if you want to hurt me,” Gavin mused.

“SEE! You are SO like Superman. Only… shorter, like… Superboy!”

“Oh please!” he rolled his eyes with a groan.

“Did you have to learn not to break things as a kid or something?”

“What? No, it’s nothing like that. Or at least I don’t think it is. I never broken things accidentally. I do have one problem though, and that’s that I have no idea what an appropriate strength for my appearance would be.”

“How do you mean?”

“Like when I was training today, my instructor spotted me on the bench-press. I had 200lbs on it and my trainer told me I was stronger than I looked. So… maybe I didn’t put enough effort in?”

Bella took a few steps back from Gavin, sizing him up, “No, you shouldn’t worry about that. You’re not a living skeleton or anything, you have some muscle at least. 200lbs might not be a good work weight for many reps, but you could definitely do it once or twice,” she nodded knowingly.

“You seem to know what you’re talking about,” he said surprised.

Bella giggled, “Dad used to lift professionally! I learned a thing of two! So, no one else knows about your powers?”

“Well, maybe one. A guy I saved. But nobody else. It’s not really something I’m too comfortable talking about. I was taught when I was a kid that it’s best that others doesn’t know. But… sometimes it just feels so good to get it off my chest, you know?”

“No worries. If you ever want to talk again, you know where to find me,” she smiled.

“And I will always be with you… in pillow-form,” he mocked her. Earning him another punch to his shoulder.