

left undead

by iztopher

Sometimes, Galahad regretted giving Te'ijal his phone number. For example, when she started reading Twilight.

For Snowsheba. snowsheba gave me the prompt "te'ijalahad", which was pretty much a free space for me! I wanted to write something new, and not just finish one of my existing WIPs, so I took some inspiration from her many wonderful modern AUs and tried my hand at my own.

this was wildly out of my comfort zone and almost didn't get posted, so I'd like to give a big thanks to Danny and Storm for beta-ing. I hope you enjoy!

...

Te'ijal liked texting Galahad.

It didn't matter that he never responded, or that he likely didn't even read what she sent him. She had so many thoughts, and no desire to bundle them up, and since he hadn't bothered telling her to *stop*, she'd decided the void of his inbox was as good a place to release them as any.

[Galahad ♥ Teomes]

Fri, Mar 12 at 10:32AM

Te'ijal: my folklore + fairytales class is reading the little mermaid which was always 1 of my faves growing up

Te'ijal: but each time I reread it the more im certain this mermaid needs to kill this prince

Te'ijal: I know shes in love w him but hes not worth dying over! I would just stab him!!!

Te'ijal: or poison him

Te'ijal: im not picky abt the manner of killing

Te'ijal: it would just be sooooo much more fun 2 read

Galahad's cellphone was the first recipient of her reactions to exam grades, her thoughts on whatever new adaptation of Dracula she was watching, the

news of her breakup with Beatrice. (She spared him the news of their subsequent hookups.) She'd long lost any disappointment at his stony silence - over the past two semesters, the lack of response had become comforting in its consistency.

Mon, Nov 1 at 9:37PM

Te'ijal: u will NEVER guess what Elini got me for my birthday

Te'ijal: haha kidding I know ur not going to react to this so im not going to wait 4 u 2

Te'ijal: ta-da!

Te'ijal attached a carefully taken photograph of her gift: a glossy, black volume decorated with two pale hands cupping a vibrant red apple. Her best friend, a lover of romances, had read *Twilight* back in middle school. Te'ijal, a lover of vampires, had pointedly avoided it. Apparently Elini found this amusing enough to test in the current day.

Te'ijal: "No one was going to bite me" simply cannot WAIT 4 this 2 b wrong

When she found a particularly interesting line, she'd zoom in and crop the screenshot as closely as she could. When the proportions of her photo app left it swimming in a sea of bland text, she swiped a pastel purple highlight across her intended target.

Te'ijal: edward DESPISES bella from the moment they meet 4 NO reason

Te'ijal: she is bewildered by this but frankly i would find it flattering

Te'ijal: [*he turned slowly to glare at me - his face was absurdly handsome - with piercing, hate-filled eyes*] ♥♥♥

Te'ijal: she fears shes the reason hes not at school and worries thats egotistical

Te'ijal: but she IS

Te'ijal: embrace it, Bella!!! relish it!!!

Te'ijal: interesting

Te'ijal: hes back at school

Te'ijal: and his behavior has mellowed

Te'ijal: ohhhh his eyes must change color depending on how recently hes fed

Te'ijal: gn Galahad ♥

Te'ijal: dont let the vampires bite >:3c

Introduction to Social Statistics began at seven in the morning. This was broadly hated by Te'ijal's classmates, but it was her favorite part of the class. She liked waking up early enough to watch the sunrise while she got ready, and walking to campus from her Ghed'ahre Apartments studio while the light was still hazy.

Her second favorite part of the class was that it was the only one she shared with Galahad this semester, as their respective social studies majors had sharply diverged in courseload once they'd finished their introductory classes.

Admittedly, Te'ijal didn't care for statistics much. Her brother would chide her for that, she was sure.

Today, she managed to snag a seat behind her favorite classmate. She'd learned back in his freshman year that he didn't appreciate her tapping on his shoulder, so instead she rapped her fingers against her desk until he looked back at her.

"Good morning," Galahad said, barely annoyed.

"Good morning," Te'ijal sang back. When she thought he might actually read her messages, she used to search his face and tone the next day, seeing if they betrayed some response he didn't bother sending back to her. But he'd always remained level and stalwart as ever, so she didn't bother anymore.

"Your birthday was over the weekend, correct?"

"It was. I am one quarter of the way to a century!"

His face twitched. She assumed that meant he thought it funny, but not enough to laugh. "Happy birthday, then."

Te'ijal beamed. She scanned her mind for the next thing to say, but the professor beat her to it, opening class with a review of the past week's homework.

After statistics, Te'ijal had a two-period break before her archaeology class, so she found an evergreen-shaded corner between buildings and broke *Twilight* out of her backpack. She was quite ready for the vampire part to start. Easier said than done, it would seem. She would rather be reading most of her textbooks.

Tue, Nov 2 at 7:57AM

Te'ijal: struggling 2 determine if im more offended by all of the boys disregarding the idea behind a girls choice dance or the existence of the girls choice dance at all

Te'ijal: I find Edward increasingly infuriating

Te'ijal: I want to like him!

Te'ijal: I want to like the sexy, long-suffering vampire!

Te'ijal: but he is sooo noncommittal >:(

Te'ijal: he keeps prattling on + on abt how hes so dangerous and bella needs 2 avoid him + then he INVITES HER 2 SEATTLE

Te'ijal: choose one!!!

When she had ten minutes left until class, Te'ijal was relieved to stash the book away in her bag.

Thur, Nov 4 at 4:32PM

Te'ijal: I cannot believe they have a science lab to prick their finger with a lancet and determine their blood type

Te'ijal: I wish my high school did anything half as interesting

Te'ijal: although I cant help but feel this warrants permission slips

Te'ijal: well look who it is

Te'ijal: Jacob, the other half of the love triangle

Te'ijal: Bella seems thoroughly uninterested

Te'ijal: but she IS seducing him for intel >:3c

Slowly but surely, the paragraphs Te'ijal read half-heartedly between classes pieced together into something worth reading. When Lars canceled their weekly lunch meet-up, she gladly took the opportunity to stay home longer and see how Bella's search for the truth was going.

Tue, Nov 9 at 6:29PM

Te'ijal: I enjoy that Bella believes u can judge a websites reliability by its creators HTML knowledge

Te'ijal: + also that shes chosen to investigate the vampire theory by searching "vampires" online

Te'ijal: beautiful demon women... now were getting somewhere

But the spell was broken when something happened that Te'ijal long assumed never would.

Galahad called her.

The phone was already in her hand when his caller ID appeared on the screen. She found herself doubly relieved she was home; Lars would hate being ignored for Galahad of all people, but she could hardly miss this opportunity.

“Hello?” Te’ijal asked, standing up from the sofa.

“Uh, hi,” came the voice, which was too soft and too nervous to be Galahad’s. Any disappointment she felt was immediately mitigated by confusion. “Are you, um...” they laughed nervously. “Serpent spawn?”

Te’ijal couldn’t stifle her snicker. She had no idea that was her name in his phone. “I suppose I must be. Who is this?”

“I’m Iya,” Iya said. “I’m sorry. I found this phone in lecture room W in Arishta Hall and you’re the emergency contact. I was hoping you could help me track down the owner?”

...She was his emergency contact?

She could think more about that later. Instead, she said, “Oh, yes. It would be my pleasure. We have class together on Thursday; if we meet tomorrow, you could give me the phone.”

“Oh! Alright. Great. Most of my classes are in Vale Hall, is that a good place for you, or...?”

Theoretically, Te’ijal was aware that she was making plans with this Iya, but even as they agreed on a place and time, she was distracted by her skipping stomach and swimming head. Galahad had made her his emergency contact. Without asking her. Without *telling* her. That was reckless, and presumptuous, and that should irritate if not infuriate her, but -

But she was overwhelmed by the thought that it meant he trusted her.

She hung up the phone and let herself giggle, just to get the bubbling sensation out of her chest.

Te’ijal read a single chapter of *Twilight* with his sturdy gray Nokia - how funny, how *charming* - on her desk, startlingly aware of every buzzing text. The small, rounded model meant the whole thing shook. First she was surprised he didn't have her muted. Then she wondered if that was possible, searching her memory of her own flip phone in early high school.

Wed, Nov 10 at 9:12PM

Te'ijal: Bella why do you think you're going to get ACCURATE INFORMATION about VAMPIRES in a NORMAL BOOKSTORE. Go in the weird one!

"Oh Galahad," Te'ijal said, swinging into the seat beside him in statistics, "I have a present for you."

"No thank you," he said pointedly, not bothering to look at her. "I don't think I trust that."

"It's your cellphone!"

That caught his attention. His head whipped to the side. "Why do you have my—"

"Funny story, actually. I have some questions about it, too." There was no way she was going to squander this opportunity by squeezing this conversation into the eighty seconds before exam review began. "What does your afternoon look like?"

He groaned, then, "...my last class for the day finishes at three thirty-five."

Te'ijal drummed her nails against her chin, beaming. "Why don't you meet me at the Sedona Library Yummy Drink Factory at four? I'll give you your phone, and you can give me some answers."

Nervously, she killed some time waiting for him by continuing her reading. The buzzing in her backpack was distracting, and she found she had little interest in typing when she couldn't at least pretend he was reading it, and so she was left alone to her thoughts on the book.

It was a shame, Te'ijal thought. She wanted Galahad to know, or at least have the ability to know, that the Twilight vampires called themselves vegetarians because they only ate animals, and that Edward believed human vegetarians suffered from a similar dissatisfaction. It would infuriate him, who, as far as she could tell from the time she'd known him, sustained his athlete's need for carbs and protein entirely on pasta and four-cheese quiches.

She briefly considered talking to him about it in person, but quickly dismissed the thought. She had more important things to discuss with him,

after all.

“Return my phone at once.”

Te'ijal laughed, unzipping her backpack and finding it beside her coffin-shaped pencil case. She slid it across the café table to him. “Here you go.”

“I hope you didn’t intrude on it,” Galahad grumbled, taking it from her.

She scoffed. “There is precious little to find on a Nokia, Galahad.” *It had been tempting, but...* “I’m surprised you don’t trust me enough not to, considering why I asked you here.”

“You still haven’t explained that to me, by the way. I assumed it was to gloat.”

Te'ijal took a careful sip of her coconut raspberry smoothie. “It was to discuss the fact that I’m your emergency contact.”

He froze. “You just said you didn’t–”

“A very nice freshman by the name of Iya found your phone in Arishta Hall. She called me wondering who it belonged to.”

That shut him up. He frowned, brow furrowing, but Te'ijal had seen him annoyed too many times to mistake the expression for that. If anything, she might have guessed he was embarrassed.

Eventually, he sighed. “My last emergency contact was my ex’s father,” he admitted. Te'ijal opened her mouth to question this, but he continued before she had the chance. “You text me daily, live in the same city as me, and from what I can tell, your sleep schedule is sporadic. I knew that if someone called you from my phone, you would answer.”

He *knew*. That was why he hadn’t bothered to ask. Now it was her turn to be embarrassed. She drank a little more of her smoothie, trying to figure out how to respond to that.

“And you did.”

“It took me off guard. And then it wasn’t even you.”

“Should I change it?”

She was much too touched to want that. It was a strange gesture, but it was

one she wanted to hold onto. “No, you don’t need to do that.”

“Very well, thank you.”

She finished her smoothie in the resultant silence. Galahad had abstained from any of the café’s eponymous ‘yummy drinks’, and she got the sense he was ready to leave. Before he did, though, there was something else she wanted to discuss.

He had a flip phone, which explained in startling clarity why he never bothered to read her texts. Beyond simple exasperation, anyways. That seemed less likely, now that she knew he was willing to rely on her answering for him. So maybe...

“If I called you, would you take it?”

“Yes.”

She took out her phone. If his answer didn't settle it, his lack of hesitation did. “Then, I’m making you my emergency contact, too.”

To his credit, Galahad looked taken aback for only a moment before nodding. “I suppose we'll both hope it won't be relevant.”

[Galahad ♥ Teomes (emergency)]

Fri, Nov 12 at 10:11PM

Te'ijal: Bella + Edward have decided 2 engage in the most irritating couples argument ever

Te'ijal: who loves who ~more~

Te'ijal: of course hes emphasizing how brave + strong he is 2 b able 2 leave her

Te'ijal: as if every other word out of his mouth isnt how he couldnt bear to do that

Te'ijal: im not sure ive ever encountered a more spineless romantic hero than Edward

Te'ijal: omg omg Bella wants to watch him hunt

Te'ijal: that's the aggravating thing

Te'ijal: I do genuinely like Bella

Te'ijal: she deserves a better vampire boyfriend>:(

Te'ijal: originally they were going to go to seattle together but the weather is nice so theyre going to the woods instead

Te'ijal: for a hike

Te'ijal: I think this is technically their first date?

Te'ijal: im not counting when he took her out to dinner in Port Angeles

Te'ijal: OH!

Te'ijal: is it finally sunlight time???

Te'ijal: I've heard so much about the infamous sparkling

Sat, Nov 13 at 12:00AM

Te'ijal: yes!!! it is!!

Te'ijal: well this is simply gratuitous

Te'ijal: dramatic hand touch...

Te'ijal: [*it's too easy to be myself around you*] congratulations, this is the first moment of their rship ive found genuinely compelling

Te'ijal: + the moment has shattered

Te'ijal: Edward just had the gall to tell Bella he didnt want her 2 b afraid when he has spent this whole book being upset w her 4 not being afraid enough

Te'ijal: lmao she leans in 2 kiss him + he bolts 20 FT ACROSS THE MEADOW

Te'ijal: aaaand now hes talking abt how ~dangerous~ he is and how easily he could kill her

Te'ijal: what did I say

Te'ijal: he has NO principles or consistency

Te'ijal: + those r like, the most attractive qualities someone can have >:(

Te'ijal: he just called her a demon summoned from his own personal hell ♥

Wed, Nov 17 at 7:15PM

Te'ijal: I adore this Carlisle lore

Te'ijal: turning Edward required a unique restraint on his part ♥

Te'ijal: vampires repeatedly marrying each other is quite charming

Te'ijal: I am a fan

Te'ijal: oh dear

Te'ijal: hes been spying on her

Te'ijal: okay good she's flattered by it

Te'ijal: bcause it would be an issue if she wasnt

Te'ijal: enjoying him telling her how good she smells

Te'ijal: [*Rosalie brought her tenacity. Or you could call it pigheadedness*] now that is my type of girl

Te'ijal: ...pardon me

Te'ijal: r they just using marriage as a stand in for sex???

Te'ijal: do NOT marry someone just so you can have sex w them

The semester drew to a close. Te'ijal found the time she had previously dedicated to *Twilight* being redirected towards final projects and review packets - even when granted a four day weekend.

[Gyendal Ravenfoot]

Mon, Nov 29 at 4:34PM

Te'ijal: can u call me?

Te'ijal: my final project in background of the modern world is a presentation on family history

Te'ijal: I thought u could help me

Te'ijal: + it would be fun 2 talk 2 u again ♥

Gyendal: You do realize how aggravating it is for you to only reach out when you want something, right?

The next day, Te'ijal neither read *Twilight* nor texted Galahad.

Tue, Nov 30 at 5:05PM

Gyendal: You're 25. You should be done with this by now.

Gyendal: Really, if you're going to waste your life studying anthropology, the least you could do is be able to do it on your own.

Gyendal: If you ever need help on something that matters, I'll be happy to do what I can.

The day after that, she skipped Introduction to Social Statistics.

Te'ijal was startled back to reality by a firm, rapid-fire knock at her apartment door. She broke her panicked focus from her aunt's Facebook page to leave her desk for the first time since her one-in-the-afternoon breakfast. The clock helpfully informed her it was six, and she had just as many hours left to finish her assignment.

She wasn't sure what she was expecting on the other side as she opened her door into the courtyard, but it wasn't Galahad, ponytail half-undone, wearing full-length athletic leggings layered under baggy basketball shorts. The ridiculous get-up was completed by a giant bag the shape and color of a carrot slung over his shoulder, revealing that he must have come directly from fencing.

"So you *are* alive," he said, more with the tone of satisfying some curiosity than any genuine concern. He paused. "That's good."

"It was a question?"

Galahad shuffled his weight awkwardly from one foot to the other. "You missed class yesterday, and you haven't texted me in days," he said. "Normally, I would appreciate the reprieve, but it seemed unusual for you. Then at practice today, Rhen said she hadn't seen you lately. Given the nature of our relationship, I decided to investigate."

Te'ijal would have laughed if she weren't so oddly enamored. "And what, exactly, is the nature of our relationship?"

"We are emergency contacts," he said. "I was concerned this was an emergency, and you had failed to contact me."

For a moment, she almost felt guilty. Almost. Ultimately, she was too excited to have him standing outside her apartment. "So your first response was to come knocking on my door?"

"No, my first response was to call you. You did not answer."

"Damn," she hissed under her breath as it dawned on her why. "I turned my phone off yesterday - I'm in the midst of a fight with my brother, and I needed to block everything out." This was getting past the type of thing she said in person and into what she would normally text him, so Te'ijal hesitated. "I appreciate your concern. I'll go turn it back on and text Rhen."

Galahad nodded. He hovered in her doorway for a moment, not saying anything. "...I should go, then."

Te'ijal suddenly wanted, very badly, to tell him what was wrong and have him listen. *Emergency contacts*, right? There was no reason that had to be restricted to physical, life-threatening ones. "You don't have to. Do you want to come in?"

He answered by stepping through the threshold into her apartment. He let

her nudge him towards her thrifted red sofa, as she sat in the purplish gray chair across from it. She didn't have a coffee table - she was saving up for one shaped like a coffin she'd found online - so she could have reached out and kicked him, if she'd wanted. She didn't.

“So,” he said, “this is about Gyendal.” Galahad had never met Gyendal. Te'ijal had once thought it would be funny to introduce them, but lately she'd been thinking better of it. “I take it there's more you want to say on the matter?”

“We're twins, and growing up, we did everything together. We'd both pitch fits when class divided us by boys and girls, because we insisted on being on the same team. Now that we're adults, he's decided this means me doing anything differently than him means I'm doing it wrong.” She grimaced. “And, well, he's in pharmacy school while I still have a year left of undergraduate studies at age twenty five, so he's been vindicated. Not to mention he thinks anthropology is a joke.”

Galahad hesitated for a moment, thinking it over. He pulled his mouth into a tight, straight line and took a deep breath. “You're glad to have met me, correct?”

“...Well, yes, but-”

“I was twenty one as a freshman. You had just transferred into anthropology, essentially were starting over entirely, and we had an introduction to sociology and a world history class together. You met Rhen the next semester, when she was eighteen and had just started here. Then she introduced you to Elini.”

She smiled, halfway at his point, halfway at hearing it from him of all people. “I didn't take you for the 'it's about the friends you make along the way' type.”

“What I meant is, *when* you do something will afford different opportunities. You seem pleased enough with the ones your timing has given you. And as for anthropology being a joke, well, I'm a medieval studies major.”

Te'ijal had to laugh.

It was after Galahad had left and she'd managed to put together a passable family tree powerpoint, complete with annotated maps, five practiced

cultural traditions, and attached research on where they originated from, that Te'ijal took her phone back out from under her bed and flipped it back on.

[Rhen Darzon-Pendragon]

Wed, Dec 1 at 11:09PM

Te'ijal: heyy apologies 4 the concern

Te'ijal: im fine just swamped w finals

Rhen: haha

Rhen: all good, aren't we all?

[Elini ♥ deAramati]

Wed, Dec 1 at 11:24PM

Te'ijal: im SOOO sorry I missed ur call

Te'ijal: I am alive + well I promise

Te'ijal: Gyendal was just being an ass + I turned off my phone haha

Elini: ughhh when is he not

Elini: if he wasn't literally your twin I would tell you to block his number lol

Elini: I'm glad you're doing alright <3

Te'ijal: ♥

[Galahad ♥ Teomes (emergency)]

Thur, Dec 2 at 1:05AM

Te'ijal: thanks for coming over to my place earlier

Te'ijal: I appreciate that you wanted to check on me

Te'ijal: and that you listened to me complain about my brother

Te'ijal: anyways

Te'ijal: back 2 ur regularly scheduled twilight

She had to wake up in five hours, which meant she should really go to bed, but Te'ijal felt high-strung and needed to settle herself down. She'd earned some time to herself.

Te'ijal: what does something "more than" boyfriend mean? this book has already "more than friends"-ed AND "more than siblings"-ed

Te'ijal: is he hoping shes gonna say theyre getting married or smth???

Te'ijal: [*no coffins, no piled skulls in the corners... I don't even think we have cobwebs*] [*it's so light, so open*] why can't they have both!!!

Te'ijal: I like Carlisle as a pastor turned vampire thats fun. Good irony

Te'ijal: oh being a vampire made Carlisle self-destructive

Te'ijal: ive always known id love being a vampire but that flavor of character has always appealed 2 me

Te'ijal: I am into Carlisle. why isnt this a love story between him and Esme

Te'ijal: oh so Edward HAS eaten someone

Te'ijal: I feel like this would be way more compelling if they started dating after this scene?

Te'ijal: her sarcastically calling him a terrifying monster... cute ♥

Te'ijal practically crumpled into her desk the next day.

“Did you sleep at *all*?” Galahad asked from beside her.

“Barely,” she admitted, “but I’ll be fine. I’m skipping all my other classes and going home right after this.”

“I’m surprised you made it to this one.”

“I couldn't have you worrying about me again,” she teased. “How was I to know you wouldn't come banging down on my door again?”

Galahad's exhale was so pointed she would almost call it laughter. “Your texts woke me up at two in the morning. I knew you were alive, for better or worse.”

She crashed as soon as she got home, and woke up to find it dark outside. It was December now, so that wasn't exactly difficult, but it was still disorienting.

Thurs, Dec 2 at 6:39PM

Te'ijal: Bella being a sneaky bastard and saying Edward doesnt live in town... so good

Te'ijal: TAMPER WITH HER MEMORY?

Te'ijal: oh I see he's just hot and bothered about it

Te'ijal: that's fine

Te'ijal: I would say this is the wildest game of baseball ever played but its less than nine innings so

Te'ijal: FINALLY MORE VAMPIRES

Te'ijal: redhead vampire lady!!!

Te'ijal: oh wait, orange

Te'ijal: disappointing :(

Te'ijal: casual AND erect bearing? choose one

Te'ijal: I enjoy Bella ranking everyone by how hot she finds them

Te'ijal: oh vampires have red eyes from drinking human blood specifically. that's fun

Te'ijal: that's why the Cullens have gold eyes then

Te'ijal: Carlisle calling Bella family!!! that's cute!!!

Te'ijal: love Carlisle answering but being misleading about it ♥

Te'ijal: he is definitely my favorite character of this bunch

Te'ijal: kidnapping your love interest for their own good, always a crowd pleaser

Satisfied she'd done her due diligence in blowing up Galahad's texts, Te'ijal turned her attention to her two remaining courses. She had one project left, and theoretically, she should study for her Social Stats final. She was, admittedly, not looking forward to finishing the class. She and Galahad didn't have any classes in common next semester - she'd asked him - and their one-sided conversations would feel hollow when she couldn't supplement them in person.

Galahad waited for the full duration of every exam before standing up and turning in his test. Sometimes it was because it took him that long, but more often it was because he double and triple-checked his work. Apparently one of his elementary school classes had set this as a rule and it had never occurred to him to break it in adulthood. He had seemed outright scandalized when Te'ijal once mentioned, laughing while she did, about turning in her exams as soon as possible so she could rush home to catch her latest reality television morbid curiosity in time.

So after her Statistics final, her only course with the decency to hold a true final exam instead of assigning a project, Te'ijal hovered outside the auditorium where all four sections were currently crammed. It felt a little malicious to ambush him after an exam that counted for half of their grade, but not malicious enough to stop her. She pulled *Twilight* and her phone out of her backpack to pass the time - there was no way Galahad had his phone on in the exam hall, so she wouldn't disturb his concentration or get him in trouble.

Mon, Dec 6 at 11:13AM

Te'ijal: Bella :(

Te'ijal: this is SO dangerous hes grabbing her from the drivers seat

Te'ijal: the most dangerous game ...

Te'ijal: NOT EVEN STAKING?

Te'ijal: I wanted to say that these "icy and hard" kisses don't sound very pleasant but actually I think I would enjoy that more than human kissing

Te'ijal: just upon reflection

She was in the middle of crafting a text about the viability of Bella and Alice entering a relationship when the auditorium doors swung open. Quickly, Te'ijal put her things away and looked for Galahad in the final dispersing group of students. He was tall enough to stand out, and she grabbed him by the arm.

“May I speak with you?”

He narrowed his eyes at her, shaking his arm free. She dropped it. “...Did you wait for me to finish?”

“Yes,” she admitted, leading him to a bench. “But that’s not important.”

He sighed and sat down, crossing his arms over his chest. “Very well then. Go ahead.”

“We don't have any classes together next semester,” she started, “and I would hate to only see you on the odd occasion Rhen invites us both over at the same time. I wanted to schedule...” she hesitated, frowning. She couldn't exactly ask him out to dinner or coffee. “A hike?” she offered. He liked exercise, she reasoned, and it would give them something to do if their conversation in person turned as awkward or nonexistent as it did over text.

Galahad tensed, and Te'ijal was preparing herself for the possibility that he was looking forward to never seeing her again, when he said, “before I answer - you're *not* inviting me on a date, correct?”

“No,” she clarified, perhaps too quick to not be rude, and then - “wait, what gave you that idea?”

“Well, you've been reading *Twilight*, and Bella and Edward's first date together is on a hike. Not counting their dinner in Port Angeles. I wanted to clarify you hadn't gotten any ideas.”

“...Why do you know that?”

He blinked at her. “You texted me about it.”

Wait a second. *Wait a second.* “You read my texts?”

A year. She'd been texting him for a year, convinced he didn't read a single message. He knew everything he'd ever told her - cared enough to read, to internalize fun facts about *Bella and Edward's relationship*, of all things.

“Of course,” he said, with the gall to sound just slightly offended.

“You have never once responded!”

He shrugged. “I don't have anything to say. Do you really want to argue with me about whether spying on someone is acceptable as long as they 'don't mind'? Besides, you've seen my phone. Texting on it is a nightmare.”

Te'ijal could have doubled over in laughter, but she just barely managed to keep herself upright. “You know, if you ever do find you have something to say, you can call me.”

“...I'll keep that in mind going forward. Perhaps when we return from winter break? We can figure out the specifics of that hike based on the weather.”

Te'ijal beamed. “I would enjoy that.”