

SCHIZOPHRENIA

There were many things about Bella's pregnancy that were not what one might consider normal for a human. First of all, she went from zero to full-term in four weeks, rather than the normal thirty-six weeks. Second, her diet was undoubtedly unlike any other pregnant woman's diet in history. Third, from almost the moment of conception, the baby began to make herself known.

Bella conceived the first night of our honeymoon. We know this because we recognize now that she'd already begun to change in our first week on Isle Esme. Due to the disastrous bruising I'd inflicted upon her during our initial attempt, we did not make love again until our second week there.

From the first day that Bella was pregnant, she became the conduit for expressing the needs, feelings, and motivations of two souls at once—herself and Renesmee. She didn't always realize it, but those of us around her saw a certain schizophrenia in her behavior at times. It first manifested in physical ways that are familiar to many a pregnant woman. For example, Bella began eating for two, literally, and unlike other pregnant women...immediately. The morning after Bella conceived, I fixed her a double-sized breakfast just to make sure that she got as much as she needed and she ate every bite. The quantity of food she ate did not wane after that either. All during the trip, she ate at least twice as much as she had before our honeymoon.

The second noticeable change was in her food choices. For Bella's first breakfast, I cooked an omelet and that meal marked the beginning of her new diet...eggs, eggs, and more eggs. Never before had Bella shown a particular preference for eggs, but within a few days, she was eating eggs almost exclusively. She consumed six dozen eggs that week. She started out eating them fully cooked, usually scrambled, then switched to sunny-side-up, and later, ate about half of them undercooked or raw (in eggnog). When I brought her new eating habits to her attention, she was mildly surprised, but offered no explanation. She just shrugged her shoulders as if

eating six dozen eggs and little else for a week was only to be expected. I was pretty sure it wasn't, though I'm no authority on human nutrition.

When you think about it, eggs are the most elemental food for birds and other species in their first stages of development. Apparently, it was also true for Renesmee, and she needed a lot of fuel to support her rapid growth. Having food cravings is not unusual for pregnant women, but the degree to which Bella experienced it might have indicated something was going on inside of her.

In addition to her diet, Bella's sleep changed right away. After making love our first night, she slept like a stone, deviating from her habitual pattern of thrashing about and talking in her sleep. She was utterly still and silent. That might not have been unusual considering the extremely long day she had had and all of the excitement surrounding our wedding and honeymoon, but this alteration in her sleeping habits remained for the duration of her pregnancy.

Despite her apparent exhaustion and stone-like unconsciousness, Bella was having vivid dreams and frightening nightmares. Flowing, moving colors, garish in their intensity, invaded her dreams and were both disturbing and exhausting. She took them to be reflections of the bright sun which she was unused to, and the saturated colors of the tropics. The Olympic Peninsula where we live is almost entirely gray 90% of the year.

There were other dreams she didn't tell me about until much later. They featured a green-eyed, bronze-haired baby boy whom she felt compelled to save from destruction by the Volturi. She had fallen irrevocably in love with the baby, so the repeating nightmare of imminent danger terrified her. The dream was fortuitous in a number of ways, particularly because she did not know she was pregnant until nearly two weeks later.

I believe that the source of both sets of dreams was actually Renesmee's developing mind. It is said that humans require sleep so that their brains can process the information and experiences of their waking hours. Colors without form were Renesmee's first impressions of the world, and she

replayed them in her mind at night. We know this because after she was born, Bella and I both watched Renesmee dream—Bella by placing Nessie's hand against her face, and me by reading her thoughts—and the images were still there. Seeing the world through Bella's eyes in whatever manner she was able to absorb at that early phase of her development, she was storing what she saw, trying to make sense of the information, and learning.

While the colorful dreams were indicators of Renesmee's growing brain, I believe the nightmares were something else. Carlisle has told us that the ancient vampire children which the Volturi outlawed manifested a particular trait—they were almost magical in their ability to attract the love and protection of the adults around them. From 500 to 1000 A.D. and beyond, entire covens were destroyed in their attempts to save a single vampire child from the Volturi.

Though not the same as a vampire child of that era, as half vampire, Renesmee seems to carry this special trait. Every adult she meets is immediately entranced by her. Indeed, our entire family is at her beck and call at all times of the day or night. We joke that she is the most spoiled vampire/human child in existence **and** the least spoiled. (Although now that we've met Nahuel and also know of his sisters, we can no longer claim either to be true with confidence.)

Within a week of conception, Bella was sleeping twelve hours each night and had begun to take naps during the day too. This could be attributed to the enormous energy it took Bella's body to produce a fetus at such an accelerated speed, but that doesn't account for the dreams and nightmares that filled Bella's sleeping hours. Developing brains require the benefits of sleep, though they never rest.

By the time Bella was couch-bound, Renesmee's desires and preferences were muddying her own. For example, we always left the television remote control on a side table where Bella could reach it. Having the TV on, even if she wasn't really watching it, seemed to take her mind off of her pain and distress and also gave her a reason to smile or laugh once in a while. One afternoon, when she was flipping through the channels, she found a BBC-produced program meant for pre-verbal

children called "Teletubbies." The characters are four brightly colored plush toys played by actors in full-body costumes and headgear. They dance and play while making baby sounds and doing activities that generate a lot of colors and shapes. It's the silliest thing I ever saw, but apparently, the colors and the sounds fascinate babies.

When the show caught Bella's eye, she left it on and became completely mesmerized by it. She smiled and sometimes even giggled to watch the plush toys roll down a hill, for instance, or dance a baby jig. It became her habit to watch it every time it came on television. The next day, she became fascinated with Sesame Street, the program that teaches young children things like colors and letters. Cartoons also became fascinating to her. One might not think anything about that except that she never viewed the programs before or again after our baby was born.

Renesmee did, though. When Rosalie turned on the Teletubbies one day for background noise while she was feeding Renesmee, the baby became spellbound by it and afterwards, she showed all of us the Teletubbies with her hand. We made a habit of recording both that show and Sesame Street so that she could watch them whenever she wanted. She outgrew both of those programs quickly and her new obsession became the cartoon program "The Simpsons." I won't even talk about that.



The presence of Renesmee's spirit inside of Bella's body became even more evident later. When Jacob came for his first visit, Bella was happy to see him. My family and I left the two of them alone to talk. After a time, we were surprised to hear her giggling, even though Bella was nearing death at that point. The next time Jacob came, Bella's face lit up like the sun. She greeted him so enthusiastically that both he and I were a bit dismayed at how she was responding to him. After Leah told Bella off for hurting Jacob, she greeted him in the same overexcited manner when he next visited, but

then her face collapsed in remorse over the pain she was causing him and she began to cry. Even Bella seemed confused by her behavior, which only made sense after we discovered that Jacob had imprinted on Renesmee and that the feelings were mutual.

Another manifestation of Renesmee occurred when Jacob and I finally got the idea to feed the fetus first...that is, to give the half-vampire blood to drink. Bella was disturbed by the prospect...deeply so. She was willing to try anything for Renesmee's sake, but the expression on her face when she took her first sip was distraught and guilty. She even seemed to be a little disgusted with herself. When I offered to take it away, though, she said apologetically, "No, it tastes good!" Part of her was horrified at drinking the blood, while another part of her was being nourished by it. After taking a drink or two, Bella forgot that she was "supposed" to be repulsed by it and just started gulping it down. Renesmee's need for the blood had rendered it completely palatable to Bella, though such an act would seem an abomination to most humans.

Renesmee is unique in many ways, but perhaps the most miraculous of all is how early and how forcefully she made herself and her needs known. In a sense, she was already taking care of herself through Bella before we even knew she was there. And once Bella realized that she was there, she fell in love with her immediately. Similarly, once Renesmee made herself known to me through her developing mind, I fell in love with her too. Just as everyone does.

Edward

