

TEACHING ROSALIE

Teaching Bella to hunt was a joy. Every moment of her first day was delightful—watching her discover her new skills, seeing her run, jump the river, and leap from branch to branch through the trees. Not only was she incredibly beautiful, but also graceful, jubilant, and inspiring. She took to her new life like she was made for it.

Not Rosalie. From the moment her burning stopped, she was angry...angry at her former fiancé, Royce, and his misogynistic friends, angry at Carlisle, angry at me, angry at losing her life and her dreams. It was not at all clear whether Carlisle should have changed her. She had not wanted to live. Furthermore, when she found out what she had become, she fell into deep despair. When her change was complete and she arose unbearably thirsty, she recoiled at what she was and what she would have to do to sustain her new life.

Esme did her best to welcome Rose—we all did, though a comment¹ I made about her during her change rubbed her the wrong way and has stuck with her ever since. Not that I feel any particular need to defend myself, but all I meant was that she was so well-known and so utterly entrenched in her(dare I say trivial?) lifestyle that I thought she never would adjust to ours.

Rosalie was even more beautiful as a vampire than as a human and she still would be admired by everyone she met, but everything that truly mattered to her relied upon her humanity. She wanted to be an object of envy, but she also wanted to be a wife, a mother, and a member of the social elite in her community.

None of those things could ever be once she became immortal. Sure, she found Emmett purely by chance, and sure, they have a wedding every dozen years or so, but there will be no children. Sure, she would have as much money as she wanted, but she would never have the status she

¹ I said, "What were you thinking Carlisle? Rosalie Hale? What are we going to do with her?"

craved. She and Emmett couldn't be social pillars of any community—we were never in one place long enough, and we would never have a multi-generational family name with a local history. (Although...since Renesmee has come along, perhaps...)

So, my family could not give Rose most of what would make her happy. Nevertheless, Carlisle had made her and she was our responsibility. When he gave her the opportunity to move to the Denali coven, she chose to stay with us. We would care for her as best we could.

It fell to Carlisle to teach Rosalie how to hunt. He was never concerned that she would attack humans and drink their blood. The idea repelled her, though she had the intense thirst that we all had as newborns. She wasn't interested in hunting game, either, though. She wasn't interested in hunting anything at all, except for Royce and his friends and she was obsessed by that. However, she would have to drink sooner or later. Even Carlisle succumbed to his thirst eventually.

Carlisle's first outing to teach Rosalie to hunt was a wash. Esme went along to help keep an eye on the newborn Rose and to soften the experience for her as much as possible. Still, Rosalie could not be persuaded to chase an animal, much less to bite its throat and drink its blood. The trio came home without accomplishing their goal. Rosalie's eyes darkened to ebony and she became drawn and weak—after twenty days, almost too weak to hunt. Rosalie's distress was nothing like Carlisle's attempt to starve himself—that went on much longer—but it was bad enough. There was no question that she longed to die.

Though Rosalie did not like me, partly for my disdainful (to her) comments early on, and partly because I did not desire her as she expected, I felt that I might have better luck teaching her to hunt than Carlisle had had. First, I knew that Rosalie wanted something from me (my admiration), and second, I was willing to goad her, harass her, insult her, or whatever else might be necessary to convince her to accept what she was, while Carlisle and Esme were not.

We were living in New York at the time and I took Rosalie to the nearest state park. The state was full of wildlife in the 1930s, much more so

than now. There were large numbers of deer and black bear, wild boar, and even moose. I was looking for deer. Though I knew they wouldn't smell particularly good to her, they would be easy for her to catch and overcome in her weakened state.

As a newborn, Rosalie was as powerful as any newborn despite being weakened from thirst. Therefore, she could not be forced to do anything she didn't want to do and hunting was no exception. A herd of deer passed fifty yards away, but I couldn't convince her even to take chase. When I asked her why not, she said, "They stink."

True. Perhaps something else, then. I had a feeling that the appearance of wild boar would disgust her, though their blood tastes surprisingly like human blood. For me, that was a good reason to avoid them, but I thought the scent of their blood might entice her to drink even against her will. We didn't find any that day, though.

As we continued to make our way through the forest, I caught a whiff of bear. It occurred to me that attacking an angry bear might help her release some of the anger she carried with her. I led her in the direction of the beast, but did not tell her what it was. When we were within thirty yards of it, her head snapped up and her nostrils flared. She reflexively took a hunting crouch and I knew we were home free. She would not be able to help herself beyond that point. I remained silent, knowing that my words were much less powerful an incentive to her than her own instincts.

She ran forward in spurts until she tracked the bear to its den and found that it recently had left in search of food. When Rosalie caught sight of the black momma bear, she did not hesitate, but leaped onto its back and went for its neck. It took a swipe at her and knocked her to the ground. Enraged, she pulled back her fist and punched it in the face. It tumbled away from her, but quickly recovered, and then rose on its hind legs and roared, equally enraged. Rosalie charged, aiming directly for its neck, and held the bear's jaws closed with one hand while she drank it dry. When the bear was drained, she threw its carcass to the ground and—without looking in my direction—took off running. I followed closely behind until I saw what she was stalking...two bear cubs.

“Rosalie, no!” I yelled, but she paid me no heed. She leaped at the cubs and took one in each hand, drinking the blood from one while holding the other in the air by the neck. She drained them both in quick succession. We tried never to take mothers with young or the young themselves if we could help it, but since she’d already killed the mother, it was probably better that she did drink from the cubs. They would be unlikely to survive on their own. I didn’t say anything further about it, but was just glad that she had finally slaked her thirst. Her strength had already returned and her eyes blazed amber-red. I doubted that she would hesitate to hunt next time now that she had done it once. We had learned that she had a preference for bear.

When she finally looked at me, I used just one word, “More?” Rosalie shook her head and leaped at me. Taken by surprise, I did not react. She grabbed the back of my head and shoved her tongue into my mouth and pressed her crotch against mine, holding me to her with a hand on my buttocks. Naturally, I froze into stillness, not moving, not resisting, not responding in any way at all, until finally she gave up, slapped me across the face, and started running toward home. I let her go. I hadn’t fed yet and she didn’t need my help to get back, since it would be trivial for her to follow our scent trail. After her rudeness, I frankly didn’t care whether I ever saw her again. Back then, nobody talked about men being assaulted by women and even if they did, it was more likely that a male vampire would fight rather than prosecute such behavior. I kept it to myself, though I was disgusted and slightly humiliated.

Instead, I took off on my own for a couple of weeks, living in the forest, not telling anyone where I’d gone or why. I’d only recently come back after almost three years away feeding on humans, and I’d become lonely and ready to be reunited with my family. But with Rosalie there, that prospect had become less inviting.

When I returned, I found that Carlisle and Esme had been extremely worried about me, but I refused to talk about why I’d left. They had recognized that there was a connection between my hunting trip with Rosalie and my swift departure thereafter, but didn’t know what it was exactly.

Fortunately, during my absence, my sister had resolved to live, to hunt, and to accept what she was. I kept my distance to the degree that it was possible and simply waited for her newborn strength to wane. Once it did, she would have no power over me. Though I would not hit a woman, I would be able to defend myself from her by virtue of my mind-reading skills and my much greater fighting experience.

There were many reasons why we were all much happier after Emmett nearly died on a cold spring day in the Appalachian forest two years later.

Edward

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