

WHAT I KNOW

Shakespeare's character, Sir John Falstaff—a notoriously vain, drunken, and cowardly knight—once said:

"The better part of valor is discretion, in the which better part I have sav'd my life."

In his case, he's referring to the "bravery" of playing dead rather than actually dying by racing into battle, weapons drawn. That's all very well, but I wouldn't want him protecting my back.

In my case, I'm referring to the discretion of keeping selected knowledge to oneself. Being discreet in this sense can also save one's life. I should know. I've saved mine many times by keeping my mouth shut around Rosalie.

Discretion is a major tenet of my life as a vampire. Ever since Carlisle discovered that I could read minds—when he realized I was answering his thoughts as well as his spoken questions—and brought it to my attention, I have learned to practice discretion out of necessity.

I am the unintended recipient of loads of information, mostly trivial stuff with little value that just clogs up my otherwise useful brain. I have to wade through it constantly, because it never goes away. (Someone like my father, or me, might wonder about the biology of all that storage. What science is at work to create unlimited "disk space" in a biological organism, i.e., vampires in general, and me in particular?)

Despite the volume of useless information, my brain still has plenty of room to store less innocuous facts about folks that they wish I didn't know. For example, when Rosalie was human, her right foot was one whole size larger than her left. Imagine the horror! That paragon of beauty, queen of all she surveyed in her home town, had an actual physical deformity! She knew a few tricks for hiding that fact, such as never wearing open-toed shoes, and buying Size 7 shoes and stuffing the left one with newspaper (rather than buying a pair of identical Size 6's and wearing the correct size on each foot, something her father certainly could have afforded).

You and I might think that Rosalie's former physical idiosyncrasy is a trivial fact, but to my sister, it's a dark, hideous secret. In such cases, it never pays to intentionally (or even unintentionally) reveal such information. Besides, being valorous—forthright, brave, and true—is a worthy ideal, one that is easier to uphold the more you practice keeping your mouth shut.

So I do, mostly, keep my mouth shut, unless it's to my extreme advantage not to. Like when Jacob was trying to steal Bella from me. It drove him crazy that I could read his mind and speak his thoughts in front of Bella, so I often did. But as I said before, it never pays to do that. Jacob quickly learned how to use my abilities against me.

Anyway, the whole point of this first entry in my diary is to explain—justify?—my intent to record here private information about other individuals that I have acquired through my special gift. Though I don't intend to share anything written here with anyone, I find that the writing itself helps clear the extraneous information out of the front of my mind and makes it easier to think about

important things. In computer parlance, it moves them from the cache to archival storage.

(I've been studying computers lately. Immortal beings must attempt to keep up with the times or they risk exposure simply by being too old-fashioned. Imagine how Carlisle would stick out if he never advanced beyond 17th-century medicine. He'd still be feeding leeches—instead of being one! Ha! A little vampire humor there.)

So I started this private diary. I specify particularly that it is private, because I never intend for anyone but myself to see it. I shall keep it well-hidden and write only when I am alone.

Edward

Ω

To die is to be a counterfeit, for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man; but to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed. The better part of valor is discretion, in the which better part I have sav'd my life.

Henry The Fourth, Part 1 Act 5, scene 4, 115-121