

ROSALIE'S DREAM

My sister, Rosalie, has a dream she's been toying with for a long time, maybe as far back as Renesmee's first birthday. It was obvious to everyone in our family that Rosalie changed after Renesmee was born. She was a bit softer, a bit kinder, and in general, seemed happier.

Renesmee has grown so quickly that she was past the infant stage in a few short weeks and past the toddler stage in a few short months. I know Rosalie was a little sad when Renesmee began to walk and started spending more and more of her time with Jacob and the wolves.

Renesmee chose Rosalie as her godmother and that meant a lot to Rose. After we scared off the Volturi, though, none of us really believed Nessie would need a second mother in the fewer than seven years it would take for her to be fully grown. Now, being Renesmee's godmother is more honorary than anything.

Rosalie wanted a child from the time she was a young girl. When she was nearly killed and became a vampire, that dream died a bitter death. It made her hard and angry to lose everything she had ever wanted through no fault of her own. When Nessie came along, Rosalie began to reconsider the issue of having her own child. Maybe it was possible. We already had one child in the household, why not another?

As she saw it, there were two ways that it might be done. The first possibility was that Emmett could impregnate a surrogate mother, artificially or otherwise. I didn't take this option seriously for lots of reasons. First, I had grave doubts that Emmett could ever get that close to a human woman without killing her. Second, no human woman who understood what she was getting into would

agree to be impregnated with a vampire's child. Third, even if neither of those things was a concern, Carlisle would never sanction risking a human life for that purpose. Fourth, if all those problems were removed, I still thought it was unlikely a woman would continue to carry the fetus after it began to starve her, break her bones, and otherwise destroy her. I could be wrong, though. Renesmee had a magical ability to make everyone love and want to protect her, especially her mother, almost from the moment of conception.

The second way for Rosalie to be a mother would be for her and Emmett to adopt a human child. She has researched every "conceivable" route for accomplishing it. She and Emmett could apply for a domestic adoption as a married couple. If they were willing to adopt a child of color, or an older child, or one with mental or physical disabilities, they might be able to get a child legally within a year. On paper, Em and Rose would be highly qualified adoptive parents—well-to-do, well-educated, and supported by a large and well-to-do extended family, including a highly regarded physician.

When I first heard Rosalie's thoughts about adopting a human child, I immediately dismissed them as wishful thinking. But when I considered it further, I didn't see as many difficulties as I'd expected. The main problem would be preventing Jasper—or even Emmett—from drinking the child's blood. Raising a human child would undoubtedly result in exposure to blood often over the years. Carlisle could handle any emergencies, but Jasper and Rose's near-accidents with Bella's blood have convinced us that only Carlisle is one hundred percent safe for humans.

Another problem with adopting a human child is the obvious one of explaining to the child why he doesn't look like Mommy and Daddy, and why they never take him to the beach, and all the other questions vampires are not allowed to answer truthfully. The

questions would grow in number over the years when the child eventually figures out that Mommy and Daddy, Grandma and Grandpa, and the aunts and uncles go away every couple of weeks to someplace the child is not allowed to go. He would discover that his family never eats food and doesn't sleep, and so on, and so forth, which begs the question: Could a vampire family keep its secrets in such an intimate living arrangement?

That question leads to another: Would raising a human child be considered a violation of secrecy by the Volturi? If so, would one adopt the child with the intention of changing him when he's grown? How ethical is that?

There were many questions, but when I considered the possibility carefully, it didn't seem quite as crazy as it had at first glance. Carlisle might disapprove, but Esme probably wouldn't. With her history, she might even consider adopting a child of her own. Carlisle and Esme already are known for taking in "orphaned" kids and two human children in the family might be safer than one.

There is a third way that Rosalie and Emmett could become parents, though I haven't suggested it. Rosalie is sure to think of it herself soon if she hasn't already. If Rose wants a baby, she could easily steal one... make an orphan disappear. In fact, Rose and Em might be better off avoiding adoption agencies and going through official channels. Keeping ourselves out of human databases as much as possible is usually advantageous.

I wonder what Carlisle would do if one day Rose came home with a child. If she chose one who was severely disadvantaged or one who was being mistreated so that her crime improved the child's life, would he agree to let her to keep it? I have no answer for that. Carlisle might argue that subjecting a helpless child to a life such as ours is cruel in itself. Rose would be taking the risk of getting ejected from our family.

I'll bet that these days, orphaned or abandoned children who end up in the custody of the state have their DNA and fingerprints recorded. If Rose stole a child and that child was reported missing, she would be risking discovery, perhaps when the child entered school, or maybe later if the child got in trouble with the law, or joined the military, or applied for a job that requires a background check. With the increasing computerization of such records in the twenty-first century, I'd wager that it's not as easy to steal children as it once might have been. The world is becoming a smaller place.

There's another crucial question: Would having and raising a child actually make Rosalie happy? Would it end her yearning or is her unhappiness already a permanent part of her makeup? What happens when the child leaves home, or worse, dies? There's no way to know.

How does Emmett feel about the idea? I know that he would do just about anything to make Rosalie happy and I don't see him having any objection to being a father. He certainly enjoyed Renesmee's babyhood and there is no question that any child would love Emmett. Being a father has been a tremendous experience for me. I'd be happy if Emmett got to have that chance and I would love being an uncle too.

Here I go getting carried away by Rosalie's pipe dream. Noting my reaction to the idea, I think about how Emmett will take to it and how Esme will be supportive and it seems conceivable that Rosalie could get her way and bring this new possibility into our lives. Time will tell.

Edward

