

MY MYSTERIOUS BROTHER

My brother, Jasper, is a bit of a mystery to most people he meets. Exceptionally quiet until he gets to know you (and he never gets to know you, or rather, you never get to know him), you'd think he was a simmering volcano of deep thoughts. I can tell you from seeing inside his head that that is only partially true.

Much of Jasper's brain activity is spent devising new ways to win at various games. He's difficult for anyone (but Alice and me) to beat at chess, backgammon, or mahjong, and is a talented card player and gambler. He loves to visit Las Vegas, Reno, Atlantic City, and especially Monte Carlo in the Principality of Monaco. (The country where Grace Kelly, the American actress, married Prince Rainier and bore three children before driving her car off one of its steep cliff roads and killing herself.)

Casinos have a particular attraction for Jasper, not only for their gambling opportunities, but also because they remain open all night as well as all day. He can come and go freely without worrying about being caught out in the sunshine...ever. Perhaps you've noticed that casinos don't have windows, which is very handy for individuals who sparkle in sunlight. In Las Vegas, one can stay inside a hotel during the day, gambling or seeing shows or just sitting at the bar and watching the crowds. At night, he can wander the strip, and have all kinds of illicit fun. Jasper always returns from his gambling trips a richer man than when he left.

Emmett enjoys Vegas too and sometimes accompanies Jasper there. Emmett loves to gamble, especially on sports... football, soccer, horseracing, and boxing. Emmett loves to bet on boxing matches. Alice enjoys Vegas too, but mostly for the high-quality shopping and the lure of the lights. The only problem any of us have when going to Las Vegas (which is best, because it's the biggest gambling mecca and the easiest place to fade into the crowds...) is improving our legal age. We all look young, Alice and I especially, but Jasper keeps us equipped with the proper papers to prove that we are at least twenty-one years of age.

As you can imagine, there are some real inconveniences with never growing older, and especially with never appearing to grow older. It necessitates our moving at least every ten years, though six is better, and updating our passports, driver's licenses, and social security cards regularly.

Before the computer age, it was not difficult to "borrow" the social security numbers of deceased citizens and thereby acquire needed documents legally. Records of births, deaths, marriages, and so on, were written by hand or typewriter and stored in a particular vault in a particular city, and rarely transferred to other vaults in other cities. Phones made sharing this kind of information easier. (Actually, telegraphs came first—and yes, I do remember them.) The U.S. Postal Service also allowed sharing of such information between employers, say, and the Internal Revenue Service, or between police departments in different towns or even in different countries.

As methods of document duplication and sharing became more sophisticated (the Xerox machine being the biggest leap forward before computers), the Cullens' legal status as citizens of the United States became harder to reestablish as often as we needed to. That task fell to Jasper, who has always been good at creating relationships with the appropriate people—whether on the right side or the left side of the law—when necessity dictates.

Jasper has found that if you want to procure illegal items, such as false papers, you would do well to have 1) a lot of money, 2) a lot of muscle, and 3) the ability to use that muscle to "encourage" procurers to keep their mouths shut and their questions to a minimum. Jasper has a man in Seattle who has prepared Cullen documents for twenty years and whose business partner did so for fifteen years before that.

Mr. J. Jenks has learned never to ask why "Mr. Jasper" doesn't seem to age, or why he repeatedly requests that years be subtracted from his and his family's ages on their passports and driver's licenses, or why when he invites Mr. Jasper to dine with him, Mr. Jasper doesn't eat. He has learned not to mention the Cullen name anywhere, to anyone, at any time.

According to Bella, Mr. J. Jenks is so frightened of “Mr. Jasper” that he practically lost control of his bladder when she first introduced herself as his sister-in-law. When Bella requested papers for Renesmee, listing “Jacob Wolfe” as Nessie’s legal guardian in case Jacob needed to help her escape from the Volturi, Mr. J. Jenks was clever enough—or frightened enough of Jasper—to ask her whether she was trying to deprive Mr. Jasper’s brother (me) of his legal rights to his child. The lawyer probably believed that Jasper would kill him if Mr. Edward’s “estranged” wife were to kidnap his brother’s child with papers he sold her.

Bella doesn’t know this—nor does anyone else—but Mr. J. Jenks has good reason to be scared of Jasper. You see, twenty years ago, Jenks had an older partner (“Mr. P”) with whom Jasper had done business for the prior fifteen years. J. Jenks took over the business after Mr. P. lost control of his car on the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge and plunged into the deep, cold waters of Lake Washington just outside of Seattle. Because the lake is 70 yards deep at that point and averages 55-degrees year around, neither Mr. P.’s body nor his vehicle was ever recovered.

One witness came forward claiming that he was driving behind the Cadillac just before it veered out of control, and saw a tall, blonde-haired passenger bent over with “her” head on the driver’s shoulder. No such passenger was ever found and no one ever came forward to report a missing person who fit the description. Since Jasper has always kept the illicit side of the family’s business to himself, no one else in the family has any idea that something happened to Mr. P. I’m sure that such news would make Carlisle exceedingly unhappy if he knew.



Evergreen Point Floating Bridge, Seattle, WA, circa 1963

Though Mr. J. Jenks has no proof that Mr. Jasper was involved in the car crash, he suspects so, because Jasper was the last client his partner saw before his demise. My brother believes in the value of fear in certain business relationships, so he allows—if not encourages—Jenks’ suspicions.

Mr. J. Jenks isn’t the only person who is afraid of Jasper. Humans are frightened of us in general if they have any sense, but Jasper carries with him an extra aura of mystery which some interpret as covert violence. That comes partly from the fact that he has drained the blood from thousands of humans...yes, thousands (not to mention the many thousands of vampires he has dispatched). Jasper is an old vampire by our family’s standards, and he did not attempt to curb his appetite for blood for at least 60 years. So, though the people he meets don’t know that he is a long-established serial murderer, they often sense it somehow in their bones.

In addition to that, Jasper is scarred...vastly scarred...so scarred that his scars have scars. Though humans can’t readily see the scars that riddle his arms, throat, and face, I think their minds register them on a subconscious level as evidence of danger. Vampires certainly do.

His ability to alter the emotions of people he meets also puts some on edge. When his calming influence wears off, they realize that he did “something” to them and it makes them wary. They become puzzled and

disturbed when they do things they don't want to do merely because he asks.

If the humans he encountered only knew how sensitive he is to their feelings, they'd be very surprised. He suffers when those around him suffer and that's why, though he does not enjoy being a vegetarian and it's particularly difficult for him, he sticks with it. When he slips up, the pain he feels for his victims threatens to drive him mad. He was very nearly insane when Alice found him. He'd been driven to a depression so deep that, like me, he had made plans to do away with himself when he couldn't take it anymore. He thought he could provoke Maria, his creator, into killing him.

Jasper doesn't think about that anymore, not since Alice came into his life. It's the first time in his vampire existence that he has known the meaning of the word "love." He thought that the hideous relationship he had with Maria was love of a certain kind, because he never knew anything different in our world. Jasper has suffered a great deal in his existence, though to be balanced, he has also caused a great deal of suffering...a very great deal of suffering.

With his brilliant strategic mind, Jasper is by far the wealthiest individual in our family other than Carlisle. He's come by it honestly too—by that I mean that he can't predict the stock market and take advantage of that, and he doesn't use his influence over humans to steal or con people out of their money. He's won most of what he's made. He does use his vampire mathematical skills and swift hand movements to get the best of a croupier at times, though since casinos are havens of such behavior (mostly on the part of management), I don't count that as cheating. But how we all make our money is another story altogether.

Edward



Sat., 04/09/11

P.S. Yikes! I just had a disturbing thought...was Jasper anywhere near Monaco on Sept. 14, 1982, the day Princess Grace drove her car off the Devil's Curse embankment? Would Princess Stephanie (her daughter, who was also in the car) recognize him in a lineup? Could the car crash be a cover for some other kind of death? What would have been the motive? Not just thirst...surely.



Devil's Curse, Principality of Monaco, 1980s