

## SEX & THE NEWBORN

*My father and I have been through four human-to-vampire transformations in the last eighty-five years (in addition to my own), but it is only now that I realize how very different it is to be the mate of a new vampire than it is to be a brother or even a parent.*

*When Carlisle found Esme in a hospital in Wisconsin and decided to change her, I don't think he did so with the intent to marry her. Their affection for one another grew gradually into love after Esme's transformation.*

*I wasn't far past newborn status myself at that time, so I didn't think of Esme as extraordinarily strong. To me, she seemed more or less normal given my limited experience of being a vampire. But my father knew more about such things than I did. Now I realize that as my parents' relationship developed into a courtship and then matrimonial love, Carlisle must have taken measures to protect himself from Esme physically. Otherwise, I would have seen a lot more injuries than I did.*

*That became clearer to me with Bella's transformation. Shortly after she awoke, my wife hugged me and nearly broke my back. Making love under such circumstances was risky business, because it took time for Bella to recognize and manage her new strength.*

*Prior to that time, of course, our relative strength was reversed—me with vampire strength and Bella as a human—so I was able to share with her some of the tricks I had learned on our honeymoon to avoid injuring her. For instance, my strength was less of an issue when I took the bottom position*

*and the more passive role in lovemaking. Keeping track of my hands was important as well as finding something safe to do with both my hands and my teeth when my excitement level rose. I clutched the bedclothes, sunk my teeth into pillows, and grasped the wooden frame of the bed to channel my excess strength. Better to destroy the furniture and linens than your loved one, certainly.*

*My advice was only marginally helpful to Bella, though. It was still difficult for her to adjust and there were times when the pleasure of making love with my newborn wife crossed the threshold into pain. Once or twice, I suffered cracked bones, though I made every effort to keep that information to myself. We heal very quickly, so I only had to remain still and quiet until the damage mended. I did tell Bella when something began to hurt, so that she could take measure of her strength and back off, but in the heat of passion that wasn't always easy for her to do.*

*Carlisle must have struggled through the same problems with Esme during their first year together, though I never heard any thoughts to that effect. After they were married, my parents were considerate enough to disappear at night and I never saw any signs of injury or distress in the morning. Quite the opposite, actually. They were always blissfully happy. No doubt Carlisle was perfectly stoic when he sustained injuries at Esme's hand. She probably never even knew it when she broke a bone. Carlisle must have kept his hair out of her hands too when they made love because he has no bald patches on his head. Once pulled out, of course, our hair does not regrow. I've never asked my father whether he acquired any teeth marks during his honeymoon days. Fortunately, I didn't get either bite scars or bald spots. I couldn't have let Bella do that—she would have been mortified.*

Though I consulted my father about the dangers of making love with Bella while she was human, I never thought to ask him for his advice about how to protect myself from my newborn wife when our conditions were reversed. It also never occurred to me to ask Rosalie how she survived making love with Emmett after his change.

Bella was a powerful newborn, but Emmett had twice Bella's newborn strength during his first year. He was a trained wrestler, a powerful fighter, and for his entire human life, he'd worked to enhance his power and learn how to use it to overcome an opponent. Rosalie had to have sustained injuries in their early days together.

I went out of my way not to read my sister's mind during those years, for she was not a friend to me. It took the addition of Emmett to the family and the passage of time to turn our contentious beginning into something tolerable. So I wasn't aware of how badly or how often she might have been injured when she and Emmett made love. I do know that Emmett was thrilled with his new amour and, unlike Carlisle and Esme, who married before making love with each other, he and Rose did not wait. Rosalie was so attracted to him and so thrilled to have him that she didn't hesitate to make advances, which he didn't resist, apparently. I'm sure he would have made the first move himself if he hadn't been rather focused on blood at that time. With the nature of their relationship obvious from the start, Carlisle suggested that they marry as soon as possible, which they did.

Long after Rosalie and Emmett were married, it was not unusual to walk into one of the public rooms of our house and find them half naked in a lounge chair (or on the couch or the floor). Carlisle, Esme, and I got used to the quick scramble for clothing and the mumbled "Sorry" or "Oops!" as we turned

our heads and hurried from the room. They would start giggling, then wander to their bedroom or outside, neither of which ever protected us from their noisy amorousness. Ultimately, Esme built them their own house to encourage them to conduct their activities out of our hearing range.

So I had to laugh when Emmett expressed his discomfort at the passionate kiss Bella and I shared just after she awoke from her transformation. Caught up in a flash fire of heat, light, and love, Bella interlaced her thighs with mine and I pulled her tightly against my body as our lips locked together. After a few moments, Emmett's irritable "Ahem" interrupted our bliss to remind us that we were not alone.

In truth, our public display of affection was so miniscule compared to what he and Rose put Carlisle, Esme, and me through when they were newlyweds that I felt precisely zero pity for him. Still, he couldn't leave the room as we always had since he and the others were there to protect Bella as she adjusted to her new status and sensory experience. We couldn't predict how she would react. It wasn't unheard of for a newborn to plunder everything in his path as he sought a human to suck dry. Since both Jacob and Renesmee were in our house at the time, we couldn't risk it. Much to everyone's surprise, though, Bella was neither threatening nor out-of-control.

In contrast, we'd had our hands full after Carlisle changed Emmett. It had taken all four of us—Rosalie, Carlisle, Esme, and me—to keep him contained when he smelled blood. He was similarly exuberant in his physical reaction to Rose and my parents were deeply concerned that he would hurt her during that first year of their marriage. Personally, I didn't care if he did. As far as I was concerned, Emmett could knock down as

*many trees and walls and buildings as he wanted to and Rosalie could just fend for herself.*

*Unfortunately, though, Rosalie was a “screamer” (as Emmett would say) and we never knew exactly what the sounds meant. Worried about her welfare, Carlisle and Esme raced to find Rose the first time they heard her scream, only to discover her and Emmett rolling around nude in the mud, enjoying themselves exceedingly. My parents sneaked away quietly without inquiring as to the nature of the emergency.*

*I tried my hardest not to learn Rosalie’s vocabulary of screams, but depending on how loudly one or the other of them was thinking about or visualizing their activities, I couldn’t always help it much to my dismay.*

*Edward*

Ω