

## SEX & THE SCHOOLGIRL

“Jacob won’t have sex with me unless we get engaged,” Renesmee announced one evening as we were running home to our cottage. It was one of those rare times when Jacob wasn’t hanging around because he had gone home to spend an evening with his father.

Bella and I both froze in mid-air and hit the ground like two marble statues dropped from a window. We landed hard and stuck, our hands clasped together and our eyes glued to each other’s as we stood immobile and mute. My immediate reaction was fury—Jacob Black was discussing sexual intercourse with MY DAUGHTER?! I’d KILL him! Bella’s hand clamped down tightly around mine, holding me steady for the few beats it took me to process what Nessie actually had said—that SHE had approached the subject with HIM and he had refused her. My fury morphed into shock. The two of them hadn’t given us any indication that they were moving in that direction. How could I POSSIBLY have missed it? I’m a MINDREADER for crissakes!

Catatonic, I searched my daughter’s mind, trying to make sense of her astonishing pronouncement. I saw no evidence there of illicit trysts in the forest, secret exploration, or frantic passion of the type that Bella and I engaged in during our courtship. Many a night, Jacob had slept outside Renesmee’s window in wolf form, but he had never been in her bed...as far as I could see.

Nessie, knowing me as she does, began to laugh. She knew that I would be scanning her mind for just the information I was scanning her mind for. Neither Bella nor I joined her in her amusement, though. Eventually, she contained her glee and showed me the scene with Jacob. I suppose she thought that would interrupt the reaction she knew I would have at her declaration. It did stop

my mind from running away with me, but no, it didn't immediately douse my anger.

Jacob and Nessie had been spending time in the woods together, as they often did, when she asked him completely out of the blue if he would have sex with her. Apparently, his reaction was very much like her parents'. He froze and stared at her like she was a creature from outer space. In the manner of her other developmental stages, Renesmee apparently had reached some milestone, possibly even while she slept. Yesterday she had been a carefree girl—today she was a ripe young woman prime for picking.

*Jesus H. Christ!* Surely a vampire can't suffer a heart attack, but if anything could provoke one, it was Nessie on that day. Dropping this bombshell was how she chose to inform her suitor and her parents that she was moving into the next phase of her life.

Through all of Renesmee's changes, Jacob had been her ideal companion. When Nessie was a baby, Jacob was the perfect nursemaid; when she was an active child, he was the perfect playmate; when she was a girl, he was the perfect confidante. My next thought was *Now he will be the perfect lover!* and a complex mixture of anger, jealousy, and sadness gripped me. At least our child's mother had the presence of mind to adapt to the moment. Her father had become completely incapacitated.

Amazingly, Bella found a way to address the rat's nest of a dilemma Renesmee had presented and asked the right questions to untangle it. She regained her mobility quickly and reached for Nessie's hand. Then she towed father and daughter along in a walk toward home as she encouraged Nessie to elaborate.

"So, you're interested in sex?" Bella asked cautiously.

"Yes, I want to know what it's like," Nessie responded simply.

"You asked Jacob and he said 'no?'"

*“More or less.”*

*How odd it was that my temper should flare again at that moment as I realized my daughter had been refused! Oh! This was a confusing situation!*

*“What was his objection?” Bella inquired matter-of-factly.*

*Renesmee answered, “Well, he got real quiet and then he said, ‘Ness, I don’t think that would be right.’ I asked him why not and he said that it wasn’t like cliff-diving or riding a motorcycle or something you would do one day for an adventure. At least it could never be that way for him. That’s what he said.”*

*I marveled at such a response from someone I’d known to be very different in earlier years—back when it was my wife rather than my daughter under discussion.*

*“Did you understand what he meant?” Bella pressed.*

*I was amazed that she could conduct this conversation so calmly. I, on the other hand, felt completely at sea and was suffering whiplash from the onslaught of the waves. I wanted to stick my fingers in my ears and sing “la la la la” as loudly as I could. Instead, I concentrated on keeping my mouth shut and letting Bella lead us through this alligator-infested lagoon.*

*“Yes, I suppose,” Renesmee replied. “Jacob thinks that sex should be part of a commitment, not just for recreation or to get rid of your virginity.”*

*“You don’t agree?”*

*“Well, I am curious about sex, of course, and I think I’m old enough to try it.”*

*“Did Jacob ask you to become engaged?”*

*“No, he just said it would be a prerequisite for sex.”*

Unbelievably, Jacob, who had been so anxious to enter a physical relationship with Bella earlier in his life, was refusing a blatant sexual invitation from Renesmee. I understood then that what Jacob might want for himself always would be overridden by Nessie's best interests. He knew, as only an imprinted male could know, that Renesmee wasn't truly ready for mature lovemaking and I saw that he wouldn't—probably even *couldn't*—take advantage of her before she reached that point, whether she believed she was ready or not. Jacob wouldn't make love to her until her feelings for him also matured into adult love.

That was the moment when I knew with a certainty I'd never had before that Jacob Black was, and always would be, Renesmee Carlisle Cullen's perfect choice for a lifetime partner.

Edward

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