

## THE SECRET GARDEN

Together, Carlisle and I have witnessed the human-to-vampire transformations of everyone in our family except for Alice and Jasper. They came to us fully formed with their unique histories and personal routes to vampirehood. We all have one thing in common, though, as Rosalie aptly explained to Bella during one of her more cogent moments: None of our human stories have happy endings. We all bear psychic scars from the time of our transformations. In the case of Alice and Jasper, the effects of their individual tragedies have combined to make them uniquely compatible, particularly in one area of their relationship.

This is information to which I have been privy for a number of years, but of course, I've never spoken of it to anyone. Doing so would be a supreme invasion of Alice and Jasper's privacy for one thing, but also, I've only begun to make sense of it since I journeyed to east Mississippi in search of Alice's human history. That revelatory research combined with the five-and-a-half years of conjugal experience I now have under my belt (so to speak) has given me some insight where bafflement prevailed before.

Alice and Jasper have always been special as a couple. They have a way of falling into one another's eyes that is remarkable to witness. They separate only rarely, but when they do, such as when Alice took Bella to Italy to rescue me from the Volturi, their reunions are powerful in some inexplicable way. Instead of rushing into each other's arms and expressing their joy and relief like the rest of us might do, they find each other's eyes from a distance and maintain their gaze as they move toward one another slowly, completely oblivious to everything and everyone around them. When they come together, they might go so far as to clasp hands, but they never kiss or even fully embrace. Instead, the two of them take readings on each other. Jasper pictures what he has planned for their private reunion; Alice sees that in his future with her; then Jasper reads how it makes her feel. Such moments, though in public, are utterly private and

*intensely passionate, only discernible (except to me) in the electrical charge in the air between them. It's quite something.*

*Unlike Rosalie and Emmett, or even Bella and myself, Alice and Jasper never visibly display their love in public. The only physical contact they demonstrate in the presence of others occurs when Jasper's protective instincts are triggered. At such times, he curves his body over and around Alice's tiny form, growling and radiating menace. We have learned to keep our distance from both of them when he gets into that state.*

*Once on a hunting trip shortly after Alice and Jasper joined the family, we were startled by the sound of automatic gunfire. Deer season had just opened and some redneck yahoos were using that as an excuse to shoot off illegal weapons. As a former redneck yahoo himself, Emmett read the situation immediately and reached out to reassure Jasper who had gone into Alice-protection mode. Before any of us knew what was happening, Jasper had whirled around and torn Emmett's arm from its socket and sent it flying through the trees. One-armed and still screaming in pain, Emmett heroically leaped in front of Rosalie to prevent her from attacking Jasper in retribution. Since that incident, none of us intervenes when Jasper gets protective. Alice is the only one who can handle him and we leave it to her.*

*Alice and Jasper's relationship has a distinctly different "flavor" than the other marriages in our family, though the exact nature of the differences is hard to pin down. It mystified me for years. They are introverted and private together, even secretive, and they are remarkably undemonstrative though it is obvious to anyone who observes them for any length of time that their love is deep and profound.*

*Alice has always been skilled at shielding her thoughts about her marital relationship from me, as is Jasper—so good, in fact, that I never even realized they were shielding anything until I found Bella and finally reached sexual maturity myself at the ripe old age of one*

hundred four. It's taken that experience for me to make sense of the rare glimpses I've gotten of the nature of their intimacy.

Ack! This is a personal diary, not a signboard, so why am I beating around the bush? It's a newly recognized and somewhat disorienting (to me) truth that in their sex life, Alice and Jasper represent the yin and yang in a *tajitsu* of Domination and



Submission. They are a matched pair, actors in a tableau of opposites, each of whose existence necessitates and defines the other. Or so I've come to understand.

Alice is sexually submissive. She likes to be tied up and tied down, blind-folded, gagged, used...abused. I try not to see the extent or the exact nature of her needs or of her and Jasper's activities. I only know that because Alice is who she is, Jasper is essential. He completes her. They role-play, but it is not a game. It is more a necessity...an inevitability, in a way. Like me, Alice would choose not to exist if she ever lost her mate.

What outsiders see when they look at Alice and Jasper is the ten percent of the iceberg that exists above the water line. The ninety percent hidden below is so intimate, intense, and intensely personal that they create a world unto themselves. The way they look at one another! If I had had any awareness or knowledge of the sexual universe they inhabit, I might have guessed what those looks meant, but I've been innocent most of my life. As I've said before, I no longer am.

Alice and Jasper know that I know. Out of inexcusable curiosity, I visited a special location marked as theirs and later, of course, they knew that I had been there by the presence of my scent. In my family, married partners have places to retreat to when we wish to gain distance from the ears of the others. It's understood that if one finds a trail traveled regularly a deux he avoids it lest he intrude upon scenes of a private nature. My parents frequent a spot near the Devil's Punch Bowl, a beautiful clear lake high in the Olympic Mountains. Emmett and Rosalie have several favorite locations they visit that

are well marked by their scents. Bella and I have a place or two of our own in the forest, though with our cottage available to us, we retreat outside less often than the others do.

Alice and Jasper have chosen a spot created by a phenomenon of ancient Northwest forests. It is a circle of bare ground completely



surrounded and hidden by large trees. These places are created when an ancient cedar, fir, or spruce tree dies in a forest fire whose heat stimulates sprouting from the cones that fell at the edges of the tree's canopy.

Seedlings begin to grow in a ring around the rotting remains of the mother, the "nurse tree," that feeds them.

Eventually, the nurse tree rots completely leaving a circle of trees with a bare space in the center. These

are magical places, which no doubt is why Jasper and Alice chose it. This particular circle of trees is so closely planted that one has to climb a tree and drop down into the private "playground," which is what it is.

Inside the natural coppice, Jasper and Alice have dropped in several boulders which are too heavy for a single vampire to move. Steel rings trapped under them serve as anchor points for chains and steel cables. Beneath one, they have created a chamber where they stow the accoutrements of bondage and sexual domination rituals customized for use by vampires, meaning mostly constructed of steel or carved from granite... steel shackles, whips and floggers made from steel cable, paddles carved from stone, handmade blindfolds and gags, gloves fashioned from otter fur and eagle feathers, plus a

variety of specialty outfits made of leather and steel with carefully placed straps, buckles, rings, spikes, and voids. None of these items could be ever be used except by mutual consent because, of course, Alice could not be caught, restrained, or mistreated unless she was willing. And I don't worry about her because as I've come to understand, it is the submissive half of a D/s partnership who wields all the power, including singular authority over the words "yes," "no," and "stop." This is a fact I found counterintuitive at first, but it becomes obvious when you consider who holds the reins in Alice and Jasper's relationship. Alice, of course.

It was a disturbing moment for them and for me when they returned home one morning with images of the hidden articles and how they are used in their thoughts, planted there by their knowledge of my intrusion into their private space. I left their presence immediately, kicking myself and very much wishing that they didn't know what I was seeing in their minds. But as she is wont to do, Alice surprised me by not caring at all what I had discovered or how much I knew. In fact, even now when she wants to get under my skin, she'll purposely think a salacious thought and visualize her "toys" in action while giving me a private wink. It always rattles me, usually at the most inopportune moments. She just laughs at me.

Jasper was not so easygoing about my trespassing. Except for Alice's intervention, he would have attacked after following me out of the house and into the forest. I didn't blame him. If I hadn't been afraid of his tearing my head from my neck, an injury from which I would heal though it would hurt like the devil, I might have let him catch me. I deserved whatever I got for my indefensible intrusion. (On the other hand, as a Dominant, Jasper probably would enjoy thrashing me more than I might prefer.) I can't explain my behavior even to myself, really, except to blame impulsiveness and curiosity.

I was a bit shocked by my new knowledge at first, though not as much as I was ashamed of myself, but as I've pondered Alice and Jasper's thoughts and done some research, many pieces of an intriguing puzzle have fallen into place. When I think of my sister's human history—which incidentally, she doesn't remember—Alice's

*proclivities make sense from a developmental point of view. In the asylum, Alice was introduced to sex by force and compulsion which no doubt was accompanied by both physical and psychic pain. That became her “normal” and in a bent sort of way, I suppose, defined her unique version of what is sexually arousing.*

*On the other side of the Dominance/submission equation is Jasper, a natural leader who from the beginning of his vampire life was forced by a more dominant vampire into the role of a pimp of sorts. He collected, trained, and destroyed newborn vampires who were considered nothing more than fighting machines to be abused and disposed of at Maria’s whim. Jasper only survived that fate himself by being extremely skilled at what he was told to do. Maria was the Dominant in their unequal relationship and it only stands to reason that a strong-willed someone who was abused like that for many years—without love, mind you—would aspire to become the possessor rather than the possessed. I am no psychiatrist, of course, and any analysis of why Alice and Jasper are as they are together is irrelevant, because in truth, they are exceedingly happy with one another in every way—yin and yang.*

*People who live in the BDSM<sup>1</sup> world often wear tattoos, jewelry, or clothing that signifies their erotic preferences and the nature of their relationship with their partners. Jasper often thinks lovingly of the marks on Alice’s body that identify her as his and his alone. I have seen them in his thoughts but didn’t understand their significance until recently.*

*Our venom is toxic to us, burning and leaving scars wherever it breaks through our skin. Using his own venom, therefore, Jasper was able to tattoo a triskelion at the base of Alice’s spine. This ancient Celtic symbol (with many variations) would be instantly recognizable to those in the BDSM community, but Alice explains it away as merely decorative to anyone who happens to see it. It is her private joy.*




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<sup>1</sup> BDSM: bondage and discipline, sado-masochism

Alice has other marks which cannot be interpreted as anything other than what they are. In honor of Jasper's scars—the brocade design of vampire bites covering his arms and neck, a legacy of his tenure as Maria's "slave"—Alice waxed off her pubic hair (a permanent alteration for a vampire) and Jasper replaced it with teeth marks, a symbol that he owns her, body and soul. That tattoo matches two other sets of bite marks, one each at the top of Alice's inner thighs. It is one of their personal secrets, which I am contrite to admit, is no longer secret from me.



This is more or less what the marks look like, though venom scars appear silver on our alabaster skin. When Jasper slipped up and let me see Alice's bite marks in his thoughts, I was not surprised, particularly, or scandalized, or even embarrassed as one might

expect. I understand utterly the desire to bite one's woman at the point where her legs meet her torso. It is the location of her femoral arteries, which still hold their power for us, even when blood no longer pulses through them. It is very much akin to one's desire to taste his woman's sex. Both are oral urges of a keenly gratifying sort. I would never hurt Bella by biting through her skin, and so I abstain, but Alice and Jasper clearly operate under a different set of rules.

Now that some time has passed, even Jasper no longer cares that I know his and Alice's secrets, as they also know I would never disclose them to anyone. It's just one of the inconveniences that my entire family has to tolerate if they want to keep me around.

Edward

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