

The Death of a Dream

Rosalie and Emmett left without a word two weeks after Sarabel was born. Alice saw them surrounded by ice and snow, but didn't recognize the terrain.

"Somewhere in the frozen north," was the best she could do.

Weeks passed, then months, without a word. Esme was beside herself. "Don't they love us anymore? Why on earth wouldn't they tell us where they were going?"

Emmett and Rose had lived alone on many occasions, and we'd all spent time away in the eleven years since Bella and I were surprised by Mike Newton on the streets of Seattle. Still, we always stayed in close touch.

Alice kept it to herself, but I knew why they'd left. Rosalie was devastated by Sarabel's birth. Not by the gruesome process itself—the memory of which tormented me, as a matter of fact—but by the addition of a baby to our family, along with the realization that Renesmee would never have another. After the trauma my daughter had endured, even narcissistic Rosalie Hale understood that asking Nessie to bear a child for her and Emmett was out of the question.

Unfortunately, doing just that was a dream my sister had carried like a burning coal in her breast for ten years. Now the dream was dead, and Rosalie couldn't stand the living reminder of it.

"It's been eight months. It's tearing your mother apart," Carlisle confided to me. "If we only knew why they left or whether they will return. Is there something Alice isn't telling us?"

"I think she's trying to spare Bella's feelings, actually, and maybe mine too," I said.

A look of concern crossed my father's face. "Regarding what?"

"Sarabel, as far as I can determine. She isn't what Rosalie expected." It wasn't the complete truth, but I was reluctant to divulge the reason for my sister's distress, since she hadn't meant for me to know.

"I don't understand."

"She didn't fall in love with Sarabel as she expected to." My father looked perplexed, so I continued. "You remember how Rose changed after Renesmee's birth?"

"She seemed fulfilled," he replied. "You're saying she no longer is?"

"I'd say Bella's having a baby eased her obsession about having one of her own. Nessie has long been grown, though, and Sarabel isn't the same kind of child."

Carlisle smiled indulgently. "She certainly isn't."

I followed Carlisle's thoughts as he remembered a naked Sarabel curled up under his and Esme's bed, sound asleep, her ebony hair a tangled mass of fir needles and forest duff. It's a story that's been retold often in our family, much to Sara's chagrin.



She'd grown to a toddler before Nessie convinced Jacob to let my parents babysit his daughter. Bella and I went hunting to give Carlisle and Esme some time alone with their great-granddaughter. No one but Jacob saw any cause for concern.

That afternoon, though, one of Nessie's ancient pet cats wandered into the yard and yowled. My parents watched, stunned, as Sarabel transformed instantly into a white wolf pup and bolted

for the back door, ripping it from its hinges in her frenzy to get outside. The terrified feline raced up a red cedar tree and Sarabel followed, growling and snapping and leaping into the air to get at it. When that proved unproductive, she started gnawing at the tree trunk as if to topple it and bring the cat down.



When Esme caught up to Sara, the miniature she-wolf darted away, spinning in circles through the yard before running back into the house and vomiting the red-tinted bark onto Esme's white carpet.

Incriminating paw prints on the staircase led them to her hiding place.

No one had expected Sarabel to phase. She was far too young, for one thing, and Leah was the only female who ever had (though two others have since). Even Alice was surprised. Years before, my sister had had a vision of a white wolf puppy, but discounted it because she was so often wrong where the werewolves were concerned.

Jacob still blames my parents for traumatizing his child that day, but from my perspective, it was she who traumatized them, though they love her to distraction.

"I'm afraid I still don't understand why Emmett and Rosalie would leave and not tell us where they are," Carlisle said, returning to the issue at hand.

I could only speculate, and Alice offered no insight when she phoned from the southeastern United States where she and Jasper had traveled that year. When September came, however, I got a surprise phone call from JFK Airport in New York City.

"Emmett's been here," Alice said. "Recently."

“Can you track him?”

“Jaz is on it. He’s never enjoyed Fashion Week much, anyway.”

It took Jasper two weeks to locate our missing siblings. He tracked Emmett’s scent up the eastern seaboard to Portland, Maine, where he lost the trail at the shoreline. On a hunch, he stowed aboard the Canadian ferry to Nova Scotia, where he picked up Em’s scent and followed it to the province’s north coast.

There he boarded another ferry, disembarking on the windswept island of Newfoundland. After several missteps and backtrackings, he located Emmett’s scent on the eastern coast, where treeless granite plummets into the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean.



Rugged landscape aside, what Jasper found there was not pretty. Rosalie and Emmett were holed up in an abandoned fishing shack enacting a disturbing and untenable fantasy. Surprised by his brother’s unexpected intrusion, Emmett dragged Jasper from the scene and begged him to withhold judgment while Emmett explained the situation.

After Sarabel’s birth, he said, Rosalie had grown increasingly distressed (something I’d witnessed myself). Without warning, she took off for Rochester, New York, to revisit the scene of the crime that ended her human life and destroyed her dreams. Afterward, she

began running east and north and kept running, Emmett at her heels, till there was nowhere left to run.

They reached land's end near the coastal city of St. John's, where Rose began to haunt the halls of the Newfoundland Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre. One morning before dawn, she returned to the fishing shack, her and Emmett's daytime hiding place, soaking wet, carrying a battered four- or five-year-old boy in her arms. She wouldn't respond to questions except to say that he'd been orphaned in a boating accident.

Rosalie cared for the injured child, rescued him from hypothermia, dressed his wounds, and coaxed him to eat. She stole medicine and supplies from the health center, using her medical knowledge to nurse him back to health. She kept him home, away from prying eyes, and as the months passed, learned to cook human food, taught him to read, sewed him clothes, and was a mother to the child in all the ways that matter.

She even pressed Emmett to travel to New York City and acquire a fake passport so she could bring the boy with them to the United States. When Emmett questioned the wisdom of stealing a child, Rosalie screamed, "He has no one! Nobody will miss him!" Emmett did as she asked, leaving behind the scent trail Jasper subsequently found.

After Alice phoned from New York with the news, I shared Emmett and Rosalie's whereabouts with Carlisle, but I couldn't bring myself to tell him the rest of the tale. Like a coward, I left that to my sister. Neither of us expected the surprise ending a few days later.

"He died. Just like that," Alice told us when she and Jasper returned from their trip. "A clot in the lungs or something."

Jasper added, "Rosalie tried to change him, but it was too late. He was brain dead."

“What do you mean?” Carlisle asked, his voice tight.

Changing a child? My mind reeled. Vampires had suffered more grief and devastation over that folly than any other in the history of our species. The Denalis had lost their mother because she'd created a vampire child, and their sister, Irina, had been destroyed by the Volturi for wrongly reporting my family for that crime. Were we now guilty of it?

“I couldn't act quickly enough to stop her, so I stayed to witness the result,” Jasper said. “Venom can't rescue a personality. The boy became a vampire, but he didn't regain his essence—or his soul, you might say.”

“You mean the child recovered physically, but not mentally?” Carlisle pressed.

“Yes, he was like a zombie. He responded to direct commands, but couldn't talk or communicate. He was strong and destructive, though, and desperate for blood.” Jasper swallowed hard, and I clenched my teeth when the burn in his throat migrated to mine. Dread filled me.

Carlisle's thoughts weren't far behind mine. “Is the child gone?”

“Emmett did it,” Alice replied.

“And if he hadn't, I would have.” Jasper's words were cold, but his distress was evident. “Rosalie knew it and tried to throw me out. I left as soon as it was done.”

I grimaced as my brother remembered the ghastly event, Emmett wrestling the newborn vampire child to the ground and tearing his head from his throat while Jasper restrained our screaming sister.

“In the fireplace,” Alice added, answering the question no one had asked.

Carlisle sank to the sofa and dropped his head in his hands. "A child!"

"We must go to her!" Esme's words cut through our shocked silence. She stood in the kitchen doorway, she and Bella having just returned from visiting Nessie. "Rose has lost her child!"

Trust my mother to see things in that particular way.

Carlisle rushed to embrace her. "We'll go together," he said, holding her close. "We'll bring them home."

That's not how it happened, though. Carlisle and Esme traveled to the easternmost reaches of Canada where they found Rosalie out of her mind and Emmett out of his depth. He'd tried to convince his wife to rejoin the family, but she refused to leave the place where the boy had died.

My mother and father—God bless them—got the situation in hand. It took time, but they coaxed Rosalie back to the States and moved her into my house in Hanover, New Hampshire. And there they all stayed. Esme said my sister was too fragile to return to the west coast. What she didn't say, but which I later discerned, was that Rose couldn't tolerate being anywhere near Renesmee and Sarabel. Their human qualities were too painful a reminder of what she could never have. The bond that had once existed between my sister and my daughter was shattered, and it remains so to this day.

The crisis brought some necessary changes, though. My family had lingered in the Pacific Northwest for far too long, living in enforced isolation on the Olympic Peninsula to avoid being "sighted." Without the begrudging acceptance of the Quileute and our ties to Renesmee and Charlie, the situation would have been intolerable, especially with Alice and Jasper gone so much.

Through Rosalie's breakdown, my parents regained their freedom. Except for the occasional tribal emergency, Carlisle had

given up practicing medicine among humans because he'd become too well known, and his appearance hadn't changed in twenty years. Once in New Hampshire, he took a position at the Dartmouth Children's Hospital at Esme's encouragement. She thought that if Rosalie could be convinced to work with him, being among children might lift her from despair. My father got Rose a night nurse position and, as a precaution, synchronized his work schedule to hers so he could keep an eye on her when she was on the ward.

"I think she's out of the water now," he told Bella and me when we visited the following year. "I don't imagine she'll try something like that again. The boy worked his way into her heart, and she couldn't let him go. I understand how she felt," he said with a sad smile, "but I'm fortunate to still have my son." He pulled me in for a hug, then drew Esme and Bella in too.

"What was the boy's name?" Bella asked.

"Frederick," Esme replied. "She's never told us his last name."

"Dawe," I said without thinking. "Frederick Dawe."

"Frederick Dawe Cullen," Esme said, placing a hand over her silent, but tender, heart.

"May he rest in peace," Carlisle murmured.



I find there are benefits to living apart from Alice. Though I miss her when she and Jasper travel for extended periods, letting her keep her secrets can also be a blessing.

When I asked her later why she didn't warn us of Rosalie's impending catastrophe, she just shrugged. "She needed to live it."

I had no answer for that. Who am I to say she didn't? As Bella reminds me so often, knowing the future doesn't always mean altering its course, just as knowing another's thoughts doesn't require me to change them.

Edward

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