

ALICE'S VISION

It wasn't only her future love whom Alice saw coming. She saw mine too, though not so clearly and never without mystery and ambiguity. But if it weren't for my sister's vision, I never would have found her.

Before coming to the far north, we'd been living in northern Minnesota. After seven years there, it was time to move on. Carlisle had visited Fairbanks many years before when we lived in Denali and it seemed like a suitable option. We all like Alaska and Fairbanks is dark for half the year and cloudy for the other half. That's an exaggeration, of course, but even in the longest days of summer, clouds hide the sun fifty or sixty percent of the time, which made it a suitable location for such as ourselves.

"Is Fairbanks too close to Denali for comfort?" Carlisle asked me privately one day near the end of the semester at the University of Minnesota.

"I don't think I want to avoid Alaska forever just to keep my distance from Tanya," I replied. "If it becomes a problem again, I suppose we can address it then. Perhaps it won't."

So we moved to Fairbanks in the 1990s and attended high school while Carlisle worked at the medical center there. We saw our cousins often during those years since they lived less than two hundred miles away. One or more of them would drop in for a visit when they were hunting in the area and we did the same. We didn't attempt living together again except for short visits, Carlisle making the excuse that he wanted to be near a large hospital.

Tanya's feelings for me had not changed over the decades. I was still unavailable and unattached and she was still drawn to me. Whenever the opportunity occurred, which wasn't often, she pursued

me, though with less offensive flamboyance than in earlier years. It was tolerable.

And then, Alice envisioned us living somewhere else...in Forks, Washington. She had “seen the eyes” which in her mind—she explained to me much later—came to represent my future as well as her own. Even she didn’t understand what they meant except that, like the billboard from *The Great Gatsby*, the eyes were a signpost guiding us to a life-altering destination.



When Alice told Carlisle that she saw us on the Olympic Peninsula, he questioned the wisdom of returning to that part of the country. We had been so shocked by the presence of the Quileute wolves there in the 1930s and their having taken such an immediate dislike to us. Alice hadn’t been with us then and so she couldn’t fully appreciate that experience.

“That’s all past now, though, don’t you think?” she asked my father. “That was several generations ago. Nobody will remember you from before, if those people...the Killeus?...are even there anymore. It seems like Indians have practically been wiped out in the last century.”

“Not true,” Emmett cut in. “They’ve been building casinos and getting repaid by the white man for all the land we stole from them.”

Jasper and I chuckled at that. Though neither of us ever lost money at casinos, Emmett was notorious for it. He always thought he could predict the outcome and points’ spreads of football games, but

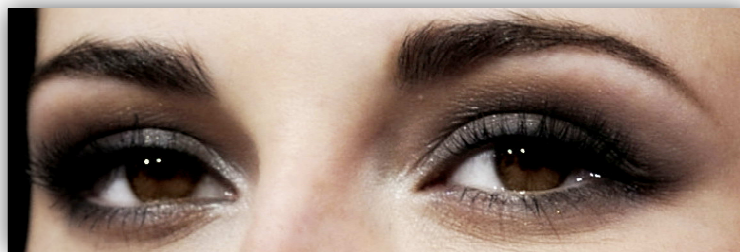
there were just too many unknowns to consistently win at sports betting and it was too hard to cheat.

“I suppose you’re right,” Carlisle agreed with Alice, “but what is it about the town of Forks in particular that’s drawing you?”

Alice never gave him a straight answer as far as I knew. When we had choices to make, we generally trusted Alice’s insight unless we had good reasons to go another way, in which case her vision changed to match the likely decision.

In this case, we had no good arguments for not moving back to western Washington and we all had liked the freedom that came with living in the cloudiest part of the continental United States. We moved to Forks and made the necessary adjustments.

Piecing things together later, I recognized the actual reason for Alice’s vision, one that would not have made sense to any of my family except in retrospect. Alice hadn’t even known the details at the time, but the chocolate eyes led us to Forks because of an obscure decision being made in the Arizona desert at precisely that time—Renee Swan decided to give Phil Dwyer a go, in spite of the fact that he was fifteen years her junior.

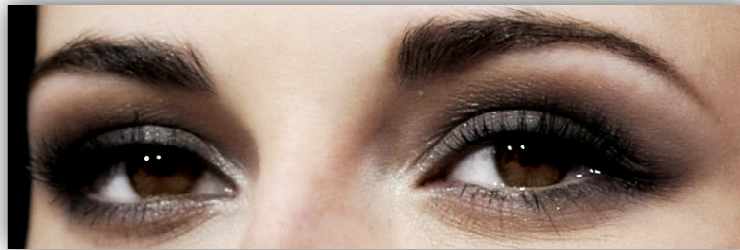


I don’t know why I never saw the recurring “billboards” in Alice’s mind, except perhaps that the melted chocolate eyes were as much tied to Alice’s future as they were to mine. And as she told me later, they flickered in and out. Renee waffled so much over whether to travel with Phil during the baseball season or stay at home with

Bella that it took a while for Bella to decide to take herself out of the equation and move to Forks.

On the day Bella arrived at Forks High School, the eyes were exceptionally bright. I saw them in Alice's head that day, but I saw them in everyone's heads—the transfer of a new girl to that tiny school being the most interesting event of the year. There was no reason for me to regard that image as a portent of my future.

Did Alice become more certain of Bella's role in our lives on that day? She tells me that she knew the girl would be significant in some way, because finally, here was the face that went with the eyes she'd been seeing for two years. It was an important moment for my sister, but she didn't yet know why.



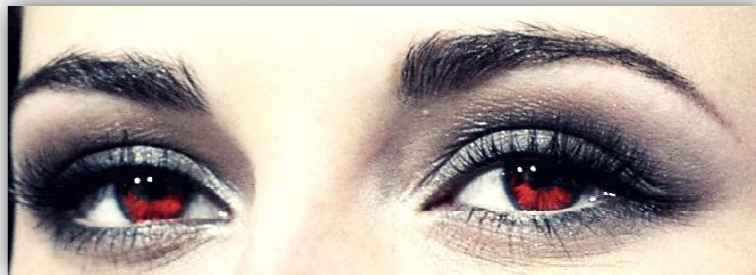
And then, of course, the eyes vanished less than an hour later in Alice's head when I caught the scent of the delicious-smelling girl in my Biology class. They didn't come back until I high-tailed it to Alaska to escape my murderous inclinations. Alice recognized that the girl's future was safe as long as I stayed away.

I couldn't stay away, of course. A combination of defiance and a curious attraction brought me back. When I returned six days later, the eyes dimmed, but they did not vanish. Alice was beginning to understand the significance of the chocolate eyes as she watched me become more and more intrigued by the wan girl with the mahogany hair. I was the biggest threat to the girl's life, though inexplicably, I'd already begun to feel like her protector.

On the day after the snow fall, Tyler Crowley wiped out the eyes when, due to the icy conditions, his parents decided to let him borrow their four-wheel-drive van. I restored them in Alice's head when I threw myself in front of the van to prevent the girl from being crushed.

Alice didn't have to tell me that later the same day the chocolate eyes disappeared from her vision when Rosalie and Jasper decided to destroy the girl in response to my heroics. When Carlisle convinced Rosalie to back down from her jealous vendetta, the eyes reappeared dimly, enough that Alice finally could see the significance to herself of the chocolate-eyed girl. The two of them would become great friends.

When inevitably I gave in to love, I had my own visions—Alice and Bella, arm in arm, the one alabaster, the other ivory. It boggled my mind. How could it be? A human girl become best friends with a vampire? And then the other vision came—the two of them arm in arm, but both alabaster. Could I be so selfish that I would ask my father to change her so that I could keep her forever?



As it turned out—against my wishes—Bella would do that herself.



My love, my life, my joy... my wife.

Edward

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