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# The Whimsical Testimony of a Six-Year-Old Vampire

## Talia Jordan

I was waiting for my mom on our living room couch when a DVD featuring a girl and a ridiculously pale man hovering over her caught my eye. I was six and curious, so plucking it off the coffee table for inspection was second nature.

*Twilight...*

“Mom, what’s this?” I asked her as she came in from the dining room, digging in her purse for her keys.

She took a swift glance at the case in my hand, “Oh, it’s just a movie about vampires in love— you can watch it.” She was lenient that way.

Intrigued, I stuffed the DVD case in my backpack, hoping Mawmaw would be interested in watching it too. Staying the night at Mawmaw’s house was a long-standing Friday tradition, and with Mom’s keys in hand, we made our way out the door.

I had a flare for vampire media before then— courtesy of my parents letting me watch *Van Helsing* at four. It took little-to-no convincing for Mawmaw to be interested in the movie, too; she was an avid *True Blood* watcher with a deep appreciation for all things fantasy. So we settled up in her twin recliners with woolen blankets draped and popped kettle corn in bowls.

For two hours and six minutes, I was in complete bliss. There was no way in hell I understood the adult intricacies of the film, but it didn’t matter. It was my new favorite movie.

So much so, that even after five consecutive years of being a Disney Princess for Halloween, I chose to be a vampire, and unfortunately never looked back.

To say I had an overactive imagination as a child would be an understatement. I spent the better half of my childhood truly believing I was a vampire. If I stared at my arm hard enough in the sun, I could swear I was sparkling. Red liquid tasted better than anything; fruit punch Gatorade, cranberry juice— hell, tomato soup qualified enough as a “blood-thirst quencher.” There was a good six months where I refused to eat garlic. Garlic was not a weakness to vampires in the *Twilight* series, but it mattered not to me, for I knew my truth.

Pair an overactive imagination with a fantastical hyper-fixation, and you sometimes find trouble. The first time was a year after I watched the movie— at age seven. In fact, I had already seen the sequel by then, as well. I was at my neighbor, Savannah’s, house like I spent most sunny Sundays. She had a *huge* trampoline in her backyard and her mom used to make us homemade popsicles. If we were lucky, Savannah’s cousin, Josiah, would come over to play sometimes, too— he lived across the street. Games were always better with three people. On this random trampoline-popsicle day, splayed out underneath the beaming sun, I felt it necessary to reveal my secret to my friends...

“I’m a vampire,” I told them plainly. Savannah’s eyebrows furrowed and Josiah chuckled.

“Ha ha, yeah right,” was all he managed. He was a year older than me, two years older than Savannah, and clearly wanted no part in our childish whims.

I scoffed, “Oh, you don’t believe me?” Josiah could do nothing but laugh,

while Savannah seemed intrigued.

“How could you be a vampire? You’re in the sun right now,” Savannah chirped.

Looking back, I’m impressed at her six-year-old sleuth capabilities.

Nearly caught up in my lie-that-didn’t-feel-like-a-lie, I had to think quick on my feet; my eyes landed on the tarnished mood ring on my tiny pointer finger, “This ring protects me from the sunlight.”

Savannah immediately grabbed my hand, inspecting the ring, “Rrrreally?” she drew out, my fibs working their magic on her. Josiah stared at the ring disapprovingly.

“You’re makin’ stuff up,” he challenged– a welcomed challenge, indeed.

I snatched my hand away from Savannah and crossed my arms, my indignation painfully present, “Fine. Forget I said anything.”

Savannah shook her head, her little pigtails swaying in the process, “Wait! Tell me about it, tell me about it!” she begged before tossing a dismissive thumb in her cousin’s direction, “He doesn’t get it!” Josiah rolled his eyes.

“It’s just a long story... we don’t have to talk about it.” There was *nothing* I wanted to talk about more.

Savannah grabbed my arm, squeezing it with all of her might, “*Pleaseeeee*, Talia!”

“Yeah, don’t give up now,” Josiah snickered.

He was much more curious than he wanted to admit.

Their interest in my shenanigans relit the fire within me, “Okay... I’ll tell you.” Savannah leaned forward, ready for my testimony, and Josiah shifted to his side, his right hand propping up his head. I closed my eyes and inhaled deeply through my nose, gathering my thoughts for the most impregnable defense I had ever delivered—

“When my mom was pregnant with me, she got bit by a vampire one night and I got the curse instead of her. My parents didn’t know the truth about me until I was three when I bit my cousin, Woodis. Ever since then, I had to learn how to control my thirst, or else I wouldn’t have been allowed to go to Kindergarten last year. My parents either give me animal blood or a special powder to add to my water to make ‘diet blood’. Nothing is as good as fresh, human blood, though...”

One long-winded, improvised monologue later, and I had Savannah right where I wanted her. She believed every word I said as her big, brown doe eyes were glazed with wonder. Josiah was still on the fence, his expression unimpressed, but he couldn’t denounce any of my tellings. Eventually, I thought of a way to convince him.

“If I turned you, would you believe me?” This was going to be my greatest accomplishment yet.

“Hmm...” he pondered, “What will happen to me?”

“You get super speed, super strength, and flying. You gotta be careful in the sun, too, but I can get you a ring like mine. The sun won’t burn you for a week, so you’re good ‘til then.” Another fib I came up with on the spot.

“How come we’ve never been able to see you fly or use super speed, then?” he

retorted. I rolled my eyes, “The Volturi– DUH!”

Savannah took a bite out of her strawberry popsicle, “Oooo, what’s the Volturi?” The Volturi made their debut in *Twilight: New Moon* as their tyrannical vampire government. There was no way Savannah or Josiah could’ve known that, so it was the most perfect thing to run with.

“Vampire royalty. It’s forbidden to show our powers to humans– they could kill us,” I spoke with the utmost seriousness. Savannah’s eyes grew afraid.

“Could... they hurt us for knowing?”

“Shut up, Talia, you’re scaring her...” Josiah interrupted.

“No, they don’t monitor West Virginia very much,” I said to calm Savannah down, “A lot of us are vegetarians.” That alone should’ve been enough to contradict my story– for why couldn’t I show them my powers if the area wasn’t surveillanced? But they didn’t seem to notice. We sat quiet for a moment before Josiah spoke up again.

“Do we get to live forever?”

I nodded, “Yeah, we age until we turn twenty-one, and then stop after that.” Another fib on the fly. Twenty-one had no significance aside from me knowing that’s when adults can drink booze.

You could see the gears churning inside his head as he weighed his options, “Hmm... you know what? Let’s see if you’re real or not– turn me!”

I hopped off of the trampoline and paced for dramatic effect. I couldn't be *too* hasty in my decision, "I don't know... It's a big responsibility... I'm not sure you're up for it."

Josiah's face twisted something strange between disappointment and frustration. He was invested now. "Why can't I? You just told us how cool it was! I think you're still faking!" he accused, jumping off the trampoline after me.

His repeated accusation smacked my pride back into place and I was ready to prove him wrong for reasons I can't quite understand— even after all of this time. Was I entertained? Yes. Did their validation in my vampirism feel good? Definitely. More importantly, would the embarrassment of being exposed as a fraud be crippling? Without a doubt.

I agreed to his terms.

"I wanna be a vampire too, I wanna be a vampire too!" Savannah chanted. I promised I would turn her after— the more in my little clan, the better.

I placed one hand on top of his head and the other under his chin. Savannah sat across from us still on the trampoline, buzzing with excitement, but timid at what was to come. Josiah took a deep gulp as I inhaled dramatically, building the tension.

"Are you ready?" I asked him.

He nodded frantically, "Ready."

"Alright... This might hurt a little."

In one fell swoop, I dropped my head down to his neck and chomped into his

flesh, growling like a wild animal.

I only let go when Josiah screamed out loud. He immediately clutched his neck and I took my sleeve to my mouth as if I was wiping blood off, a smug look plastered across my face.

“I told you it would hurt.”

Savannah spoke for the first time in minutes, “...How do you feel, Jo?”

He shrugged, “I don’t feel any different. My neck hurts, though.” I left quite the mark on his neck; you could see a hole from every individual tooth and the perimeter beamed with red, irritated flush.

“It takes a couple hours before you feel the effects,” I explained matter-of-factly, “Be sure to stay away from your mawmaw and pawpaw for a couple of hours until you control your hunger.”

Josiah’s eyes bulged with fear, “What? You didn’t say anything about that!”

Josiah’s grandparents were elderly— his concern was sound.

I cocked my head to the side. It would’ve been considered condescending if I knew what that principle was at the time, “What did you think vampires did?” Shows how much he was listening to my backstory.

“Is he gonna kill Mawmaw and Pawpaw?!” Savannah shrieked, panic palpable in her voice.



“Not if he’s careful!” I smirked.

After a quick pep-talk on how not to kill his grandparents, it was time for me to head home for lunch. As good as my terrorizing handiwork felt, I was more proud to be taken seriously. I wanted so badly to be a part of something special– a world separate from mine. How better to immerse oneself than with a tribe to lead? With enough convincing, Josiah believed he was a fledgling and Savannah believed her grandparents would be safe. And maybe with enough ice, Josiah’s neck wouldn’t have whelped up as much as it did, but we weren’t thinking about that at the time.

I thought about it hard though when my mom got a call from his grandmother an hour later, *FUMING* about the bruised bite mark on her grandson’s neck. I was “grounded” for two weeks. “Grounded” meaning I wasn’t allowed to watch TV *or* see Savannah during that time. Even if I wasn’t grounded, I doubt I would’ve been able to see Savannah, anyway. The punishment didn’t do much, for that wasn’t the last time my imagination got the better of me. Josiah revealed to me later that he never felt the effects of his “transition,” but I told him it was because he “didn’t go into it with an open mind.”

I turned twenty-one last week. I’ve got an open mind. I look forward to not aging.