

I didn't want to be too early to school, but I couldn't stay in the house anymore. I put on my jacket and headed out into the rain.

Finding the school wasn't difficult, though I'd never been there before. The school was, like most other things, just off the highway (*autoroute*). It was not obvious that it was a school; only the sign which declared it to be the Forks High School, made me stop. It looked like a collection of matching houses, build with maroon-colored bricks. There were so many trees and shrubs I couldn't see its size at first. Where were the chain-link fences (*barrières*), the metal detectors?

I parked in front of the first building, which had a small sign over the door reading FRONT OFFICE. I took a deep breath before opening the door.

The red-haired woman looked-up. "Can I help you?"

"I'm Isabella Swan," I informed her, and saw the immediate awareness light her eyes. I was expected, a topic of gossip no doubt. Daughter of the Chief's flighty (*qui est partie*) ex-wife, come home at last.

"Of course," she said. She dug through a precariously stacked pile of documents on her desk till she found the ones she was looking for. "I have your schedule right here, and a map of the school." She brought several sheets to the counter to show me.

She went through my classes for me, highlighting the best route to each on the map, and gave me a slip to have each teacher sign, which I was to bring back at the end of the day. She smiled at me and hoped that I would like it in Forks. I smiled back as convincingly as I could.

I looked at the map in the truck, trying to memorize it now; hopefully I wouldn't have to walk around with it stuck in front of my nose all day. I stuffed everything in my bag, slung the strap over my shoulder, and sucked in a huge breath. I can do this, I lied to myself feebly. No one was going to bite me. I finally exhaled and stepped out of the truck.

I kept my face pulled back into my hood as I walked to the sidewalk, crowded with teenagers. My plain black jacket didn't stand out, I noticed in relief.

The classroom was small. The people in front of me stopped just inside the door to hang up their coats on a long row of hooks. I copied them. They were two girls, one a porcelain-colored blonde, the other also pale, with light brown hair.

I took the slip up to the teacher, a tall, balding man whose desk had a nameplate identifying him as Mr. Mason. He gawked at me when he saw my name (not an encouraging response) and of course I flushed tomato red. But at least he sent me to an empty desk at the back without introducing me to the class. It was harder for my new classmates to stare at me in the back, but somehow, they managed.

From *Twilight*, by Stephanie Meyer