



A contemporary tormented love, *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer

Stephenie Meyer is a contemporary novelist, author of the successful *Twilight* saga. *Twilight* was published in 2005 and was followed by *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007), and *Breaking Dawn* (2008). Meyer cites many novelists as inspiration for the *Twilight* series, Jane Austen (*Pride and Prejudice*); W. Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice*) and Emily Brontë (*Wuthering Heights*). The novels of the *Twilight* cycle were adapted into films.

In the first novel, Bella, the protagonist, moves to her dad's house in the rainy town of Forks, leaving her mother in Florida with her new fiancé. She is attracted to Edward Cullen, a distant and incredibly handsome boy. They start a relationship and Bella discovers he is a vampire of a specific clan who hunts wildlife instead of humans. Bella feels safe and falls hopelessly in love with him, a feeling which is mutual. They attempt to hide Edward's identity from her family and the rest of the school. Bella and Edward struggle to make their relationship work especially when vampires from an outside clan infiltrate the Cullen territory and start hunting her. In the excerpt below, Bella tells about the first time she met the group of vampires Edward belongs to.



We sat at the end of a full table with several of her friends, who she introduced to me. I forgot all their names as soon as she spoke them. They seemed impressed by her bravery¹ in speaking to me. The boy from English, Eric, waved² at me from across the room. It was there, sitting in the lunchroom, trying to make conversation with seven curious strangers, that I first saw them. They were sitting in the corner of the cafeteria, as far away from where I sat as possible in the long room. There were five of them. They weren't talking, and they weren't eating, though they each had a tray³ of untouched food in front of them. They weren't gawking⁴ at me, unlike most of the other students, so it was safe to stare at them without fear of meeting an excessively interested pair of eyes. But it was none of these things that caught, and held, my attention.

They didn't look anything alike.⁵ Of the three boys, one was big — muscled like a serious weight lifter,⁶ with dark, curly hair. Another was taller, leaner,⁷ but still muscular, and honey blond. The last was lank,⁸ less bulky,⁹ with untidy, bronze-colored hair. He was more boyish than the others, who looked like they could be in

college, or even teachers here rather than students.

[...]

But all this is not why I couldn't look away. I stared because their faces, so different, so similar, were all devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful. They were faces you never expected to see except perhaps on the airbrushed¹⁰ pages of a fashion magazine. Or painted by an old master as the face of an angel. It was hard to decide who was the most beautiful — maybe the perfect blond girl, or the bronze-haired boy.

They were all looking away — away from each other, away from the other students, away from anything in particular as far as I could tell. As I watched, the small girl rose with her tray — unopened soda, unbitten¹¹ apple — and walked away with a quick, graceful lope¹² that belonged on a runway. I watched, amazed at her lithe¹³ dancer's step, till she dumped¹⁴ her tray and glided¹⁵ through the back door, faster than I would have thought possible. My eyes darted back to the others, who sat unchanging.

"Who are they?" I asked the girl from my Spanish class, whose name I'd forgotten.

GLOSSARY

1 courage – 2 moved her hand – 3 serving dish – 4 looking curiously – 5 similar – 6 a man who lifts weights – 7 thinner – 8 fat – 9 muscular – 10 turned – 11 not eaten – 12 walk with long steps – 13 agile – 14 cleaned – 15 moved slowly

ACTIVITIES

1 Answer the following questions.

1 Who is the narrator?

2 Where is the scene set?

3 Who does Bella see?

4 Why do they look different from the other students?

