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Twilight by Stephenie Meyer

CHAPTER ONE – FIRST SIGHT

My mother drove me to the airport with the windows rolled down. It was seventy-five degrees in Phoenix, the sky a perfect, cloudless blue. I was wearing my favorite shirt – sleeveless, white eyelet lace; I was wearing it as a farewell gesture. My carry-on item was a parka.

In the Olympic Peninsula of northwest Washington State, a small town named Forks exists under a near-constant cover of clouds. It rains on this inconsequential town more than any other place in the United States of America. It was from this town and its gloomy, omnipresent shade that my mother escaped with me when I was only a few months old. It was in this town that I'd been compelled to spend a month every summer until I was fourteen. That was the year I finally put my foot down; these past three summers, my dad, Charlie, vacationed with me in California for two weeks instead.

It was to Forks that I now exiled myself – an action that I took with great horror. I detested Forks.

I loved Phoenix. I loved the sun and the blistering heat. I loved the vigorous, sprawling city.

“Bella,” my mom said to me – the last of a thousand times – before I got on the plane. “You don't have to do this.”

My mom looks like me, except with short hair and laugh lines. I felt a spasm of panic as I stared at her wide, childlike eyes. How could I leave my loving, erratic, harebrained mother to fend for herself? Of course she had Phil now, so the bills would probably get paid, there would be food in the refrigerator, gas in her car, and someone to call when she got lost, but still...

“I want to go,” I lied. I'd always been a bad liar, but I'd been saying this lie so frequently lately that it sounded almost convincing now.

“Tell Charlie I said hi.”

“I will.”

“I'll see you soon,” she insisted. “You can come home whenever you want – I'll come right back as soon as you need me.”

But I could see the sacrifice in her eyes behind the promise.

“Don't worry about me,” I urged. “It'll be great. I love you, Mom.”

She hugged me tightly for a minute, and then I got on the plane, and she was gone.

It's a four-hour flight from Phoenix to Seattle, another hour in a small plane up to Port Angeles, and then an hour drive back down to Forks. Flying doesn't bother me; the hour in the car with Charlie, though, I was a little worried about.

Charlie had really been fairly nice about the whole thing. He seemed genuinely pleased that I was coming to live with him for the first time with any degree of permanence. He'd already gotten me registered for high school and was going to help me get a car.

But it was sure to be awkward with Charlie. Neither of us was what anyone would call verbose, and I didn't know what there was to say regardless. I knew he was more than a little confused by my decision – like my mother before me, I hadn't made a secret of my distaste for Forks.

When I landed in Port Angeles, it was raining. I didn't see it as an omen – just unavoidable. I'd already said my goodbyes to the sun.

Charlie was waiting for me with the cruiser. This I was expecting, too. Charlie is Police Chief Swan to the good people of Forks. My primary motivation behind buying a car, despite the scarcity of my funds, was that I refused to be driven around town in a car with red and blue lights on top. Nothing slows down traffic like a cop.

Charlie gave me an awkward, one-armed hug when I stumbled my way off the plane.

"It's good to see you, Bells," he said, smiling as he automatically caught and steadied me. "You haven't changed much. How's Renée?"

"Mom's fine. It's good to see you, too, Dad." I wasn't allowed to call him Charlie to his face.

I had only a few bags. Most of my Arizona clothes were too permeable for Washington. My mom and I had pooled our resources to supplement my winter wardrobe, but it was still scanty. It all fit easily into the trunk of the cruiser.

"I found a good car for you, really cheap," he announced when we were strapped in.

"What kind of car?" I was suspicious of the way he said "good car for you" as opposed to just "good car."

"Well, it's a truck actually, a Chevy."

"Where did you find it?"

"Do you remember Billy Black down at La Push?" La Push is the tiny Indian reservation on the coast.

"No."

"He used to go fishing with us during the summer," Charlie prompted.

That would explain why I didn't remember him. I do a good job of blocking painful, unnecessary things from my memory.

“He’s in a wheelchair now,” Charlie continued when I didn’t respond, “so he can’t drive anymore, and he offered to sell me his truck cheap.”

“What year is it?” I could see from his change of expression that this was the question he was hoping I wouldn’t ask.

“Well, Billy’s done a lot of work on the engine – it’s only a few years old, really.”

I hoped he didn’t think so little of me as to believe I would give up that easily. “When did he buy it?”

“He bought it in 1984, I think.”

“Did he buy it new?”

“Well, no. I think it was new in the early sixties – or late fifties at the earliest,” he admitted sheepishly.

“Ch – Dad, I don’t really know anything about cars. I wouldn’t be able to fix it if anything went wrong, and I couldn’t afford a mechanic...”

“Really, Bella, the thing runs great. They don’t build them like that anymore sideways at me with a hopeful expression.

Wow. Free.

.”

The thing, I thought to myself... it had possibilities – as a nickname, at the very least.

“How cheap is cheap?” After all, that was the part I couldn’t compromise on.

“Well, honey, I kind of already bought it for you. As a home-coming gift.” Charlie peeked