



Universidad
Andrés Bello®

UNIVERSIDAD ANDRÉS BELLO

Facultad de Educación

Pedagogía en Inglés

**THE USE OF FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING
COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING
COMPREHENSION SKILLS IN ENGLISH**

Seminario para optar al título de profesor de inglés para la enseñanza básica y
media y al grado académico de Licenciado en Educación

Supervisor: Carol Gómez Merino

Karla Meléndez

Montserrat Muñoz Lucas

Santiago, Enero de 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
RESUMEN	vii
1. INTRODUCTION	8
1.1 General Background	8
1.2 The Current Study	9
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Reading	11
2.2 Motivation and Reading	14
2.3 Types of Reading	15
2.3.1. Extensive reading	15
2.3.2. Intensive reading	16
2.3.3. Sustained silent reading	16
2.3.4. Free voluntary reading	17
2.3 Reading Comprehension Strategies	18
2.3.1. Scanning	19
2.3.2. Skimming	19
2.4 The Present Study	20
3. METHODOLOGY	21
3.1 Overall Design	21
3.2 Context	22
3.3 Participants	22
3.4 Data collection instruments	23
3.4.1. Pre and post-tests	23
3.4.1.1 Pre-test	23
3.4.1.2 Post-test	23
3.4.1.3 Delayed post-test	24
3.4.2 Interview	24
3.5 Intervention	24
3.6 Intervention Methodology	26
4. RESULTS	27

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

4.1 The Pre-test.....	27
4.2 Post- test.....	28
4.3 Delayed Post-test.....	29
4.4 Overall Gains.....	30
4.5 Interview Results.....	31
5. DISCUSSION.....	33
5.1 The effectiveness of Reading Comprehension Strategies on the development of reading Comprehension skills.....	33
5.2 The effectiveness of Free Voluntary Reading on the development of reading Comprehension skills.	34
5.3 Perceptions about Reading Comprehension Strategies and Free Voluntary Reading.....	36
5.4 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research.....	37
6. CONCLUSIONS.....	39
REFERENCES.....	40
APPENDIX A.....	44
LESSON PLAN 1.....	44
LESSON PLAN 2.....	45
LESSON PLAN 3.....	46
LESSON PLAN 4.....	47
APPENDIX B.....	48
PRE-TEST.....	48
DELAYED POST-TEST.....	54
APPENDIX C.....	58
INTERVIEW.....	58
APPENDIX D.....	66
READING MATERIAL.....	66

TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 3. 1 DIAGRAM OF THE INTERVENTION 25

FIGURE 4. 1 PRE-TEST RESULTS 27

FIGURE 4. 2 RESULTS POST-TEST 28

FIGURE 4. 3 RESULTS DELAYED POST-TEST 29

FIGURE 4. 4 OVERALL GAINS 30

TABLE 4. 1 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT READING..... 31

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank to family and friends who with patience and love supported our work. We would also like to thank the administration, the teachers, and the students of Colegio Sagrado Corazón de La Reina; especially, the students who participated in our study.

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the area of Reading Comprehension, a skill that needs attention in the Chilean Educational System. We explored the use of Reading Comprehension Strategies and Free Voluntary Reading with the purpose of examining the possible effects of Reading Comprehension Strategies and Free Voluntary Reading in a Mixed Methods Single Case Study about student's reading skills and perceptions about reading by providing her with opportunities to freely select texts of her interest to be read in the school and also at home.

The participant of this research study was trained on Reading Comprehension Strategies and was also given the opportunity to read texts of her own interest.

As data collection instruments, pre-test, post-test and delayed post-tests were used, which gave us quantitative data, and to support this data we conducted an interview which gave us qualitative data about the perceptions of the participant.

After the intervention we could see that the majority of students in the school were not motivated to read, and this fact was reflected in the low number of students who joined the study, since they had to do it voluntarily. The results obtained after analyzing the instruments helped us to confirm that the participant was able to develop and improve her reading skills with the help of the training on reading strategies and also by having the chance to freely read texts of her own interest.

RESUMEN

Este estudio aborda el área de comprensión de lectura, una habilidad que requiere atención en el sistema educativo chileno. Hemos explorado el uso de estrategias de comprensión lectora y de lectura voluntaria libre (Free Voluntary Reading) con el propósito de examinar los posibles efectos de estrategias de comprensión lectora y lectura voluntaria libre en las habilidades de lectura de los estudiantes y sus percepciones acerca de la lectura, proporcionándoles oportunidades de seleccionar libremente los textos de su interés para ser leídos en la escuela y también en el hogar.

En un estudio de método mixto de caso único, la participante de esta investigación fue entrenada en estrategias de comprensión lectora y también se le dio la oportunidad de leer textos de su propio interés.

Para la recolección de datos los instrumentos utilizados fueron pre-test, un post-test y post-test retrasado que nos dieron los datos cuantitativos, y para apoyar a estos datos se realizó una entrevista que nos dio datos cualitativos sobre las percepciones de los participantes.

Después de la intervención pudimos ver que la mayoría de los estudiantes en el colegio no parecían motivados a leer, y este hecho se refleja en el bajo número de estudiantes que se unió al taller de lectura. Los resultados obtenidos después de la revisión de los instrumentos nos ayudaron a confirmar que la participante fue capaz de desarrollar sus habilidades de lectura con la ayuda del entrenamiento en estrategias de comprensión de lectura y a través de la lectura voluntaria.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

In Chile, the national curriculum for English is based on the development of four main language skills: speaking, writing, listening and reading. Based on that premise, what standardized national test results have revealed in the last years does not offer a positive panorama of how Chilean secondary students have developed, in this case, two of those four main skills (listening and reading), reading being the weakest area. The Chilean measurement system for quality in education (SIMCE) has published the results of two instances in which English has been measured at a national level.

In 2010, SIMCE results showed that from the total of students tested (eleventh graders along the country), the average of achievement in reading comprehension was of 51 points out a maximum of 70; whereas in 2012 the mean was 48 points.

Considering the above explained, for us as future teachers of English, developing reading comprehension skills in our students appears as a necessary concern. It is important then, to find the ways and paths to enhance students' performance in the reading area as a tool for language development. That is why in the present study we intend to focus on the reading ability, which is one of the four essential components of English language learning (MINEDUC, 2014). Brown (2001) states that "Reading ability will be developed best in association with writing, listening, and speaking [...] the [learning] goals will be best achieved by capitalizing on the interrelationship of skills, especially the reading-writing connection" (p.289). However, the reality in terms of reading of a great portion of Chilean secondary students, according to what we have been able to observe and hear from other teachers and teachers in preparation, reflects that learners do not read unless it is mandatory for them, this even in their mother tongue. Students who do read are usually the exceptions in a classroom. This lack of

interest on reading can be caused due to a lot of different factors: sociocultural, poor selection of reading materials, material that is too difficult or too easy, etc. The Center of Public Studies (CEP, 2007), states that “Reading comprehension has proven to be a recalcitrant problem. Even though children in the lower grades can manage simple texts, many students, in particular those from low-income families, struggle when confronting more advanced texts.”

The Chilean reality presents a picture in which students lack motivation to voluntarily read, and because of that, English teachers have the monumental task in helping their students to become successful readers in English, by encouraging them to develop their skills in this particular area of language learning. Reading Comprehension is an ability needed by anyone who wants to achieve any intellectual goal, and Chile is still at the lowest levels in most of the international rankings, such as PISA results, which place Chile 51st in relation to reading comprehension skills, compared to OECD countries.

1.2 The Current Study

The idea to conduct this study is based on the need for emphasizing the development of reading comprehension skills, since based on the Chilean classrooms in which we have had our field experiences; we can state that reading is one of the English skills that need attention. Thanks to the research that has been previously done and also from our personal experience in the classroom, where we have found difficulties from the students in reading comprehension skills; Free Reading seems to be a suitable strategy to deal with this problem. All seems perfect on paper; nevertheless we do not know whether our Chilean students will be able to manage Free Reading.

The purpose of this study is to examine the possible effects of Reading Comprehension Strategies and Free Voluntary Reading on students’ reading skills and their perceptions about reading by providing them with opportunities to freely select texts of their interest to be read in the school and also at home, and

through this, encourage them to share their thoughts and opinions regarding reading. As specific objective, this study also aims to possibly increase students' interest in reading, by providing them with what was above explained.

This thesis is divided in six chapters, including (1) an introduction, (2) a review of relevant literature and previous studies in this area of research, (3) the methodology section in which the data collection procedures are detailed, as well as the procedures that were followed, (4) the presentation of the results, (5) the discussion of the results, and (6) the final conclusions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, relevant and updated literature has been revised and is exposed in order to address the main concepts that this study intends to explore. First, the topics of reading and reading comprehension are explained to then move to some of the reading strategies that are suggested to be enhanced by previous research, to finally examine the concept of free voluntary reading as a type of reading to develop reading comprehension skills.

2.1 Reading

According to the Oxford Dictionary Online, to read is to “look at and comprehend the meaning of (written or printed matter) by interpreting the characters or symbols of which it is composed”. Another definition established by Cambridge Dictionaries Online, states that to read is “to look at and understand (printed or written words or other signs)”. Having these definitions in mind, in simple words, Reading may be defined as the act of decoding words in different formats. However, according to the National Accessible Reading Assessment Projects (NARAP), reading does not only involve decoding, but “Reading is decoding and understanding written text. Decoding requires translating the symbols of writing systems (including braille) into the spoken words they represent. Understanding is determined by the purposes for reading, the context, the nature of the text, and the readers’ strategies and knowledge.” (Cline, Johnstone, and King, 2006, p.2). As it can be seen, in the process of Reading there are two important factors: decoding and understanding.

On the one hand, decoding is identifying words or symbols that with the aid of previous knowledge may be easily represented, or in case words are not recognized, the reader has to look for meaning and add these symbols or words to the existing vocabulary in order to relate them to the spoken language. On the other hand, understanding is based on certain goals for reading that the reader

may provide to this process; most of the time in accordance with their prior knowledge and some strategies (NARAP).

Reading may also be defined as a process of great interaction and complexity in which the reader's background knowledge, the information inferred from a written text, and the reading situation context, play an important role in order to construct meaning. Having this in consideration, it is important to mention that the reader's previous knowledge helps in the interaction with the text, so that he or she may try to make sense of the text getting new information, vocabulary and ideas (Dutcher, 1990).

Reading is mentioned to be important since most of the academic school activities are based on reading, because it is through it that readers obtain new and different knowledge from texts. Such knowledge might be acquired in different ways depending on the readers' interest and previous knowledge that will cause a variety of perceptions and interpretations about the text (Jiménez, 2004).

Compelling all reading definitions, Reading is not only decoding but it also involves more complex processes such as reviewing previous knowledge, constructing meaning, obtaining new knowledge and interpreting.

As it was mentioned before, reading involves more than just one process. But when talking about Reading comprehension, this concept addresses the act of understanding from a different perspective. In the following paragraphs, the differences between reading and reading comprehension will be mentioned and explained regarding the concept of understanding.

Snow (2002) defines reading comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Comprehension by itself is divided into three elements known as: the reader, the text, and the activity" (p.13). Firstly, the reader involves all the capabilities, abilities, knowledge, and experiences that a person brings to the act of reading; then, the text is widely constructed and in different

formats; and lastly, the activity includes the purposes, processes, and consequences associated with the act of reading.

Reading comprehension is also viewed as part of a cognitive process. (Kendeou, Trevors, Van den Broek and Espin, 2012; Van den Broek, Rapp, & Kendeou, 2005). When reading, the reader tries to understand sentences making meaning based on processing vocabulary, identifying phonologic, orthographic and semantic representations, connecting them in this process in order to get meaning of the sentences. The goal of reading comprehension is to understand a text as a general idea, for which the reader has to connect individual ideas in order to get a reasonable mental representation of the text, action that clearly identifies Reading comprehension as a process more complex than just Reading. That is why it is important to mention that readers do not get a full understanding of words simply by decoding; it is meanwhile they are systematically advancing and facing more highly developed texts that they focus more in making meaning relating individual and general ideas, and prior knowledge rather than word decoding (Serafini, 2012).

According to the Curricular Bases (2012) for English, Reading comprehension involves constructing meaning from written information expressed in texts of various types (literary and non-literary) and knowledge of the reader. Like listening comprehension, reading comprehension ability connects students with clear information in the language and language models can then be used in the written production. The development of reading comprehension is an essential tool that allows students to access new knowledge, interesting topics and aspects of English culture. Reading comprehension will be built with the help of the student's previous knowledge and according to the tasks and purposes for reading. Thus, students can read simple texts adapted or authentic in which they recognize the subject, general ideas or simply express their feelings about what they read. (EFL English Curriculum Organization).

As it can be observed, what theory claims about reading and reading comprehension is strictly connected to the objectives set by the National Curriculum guidelines according to what students should develop in relation to reading skills. This is one of the reasons why considering reading comprehension as a topic to be studied appears as relevant and helpful, since it is not only related to students' development, but also to their motivation for learning.

2.2 Motivation and Reading

According to the TKT course book, motivation is “thoughts and feelings which make us want to continue to want to do something and which turn our wishes into action” (Spratt, Puvelnerss and Williams, 2011, p.53). Cambria and Guthrie (2010) declare that “What we mean by motivation are the values, beliefs, and behaviours surrounding reading for an individual” (p.16). Therefore, motivation is an important factor in reading, since this process requires the reader to be capable of maintaining attention for an estimated period of time in a text, so that his or her feelings, values, beliefs, and thoughts when reading are included and developed during this process.

McGeown (2013), states that “Children’s motivation to read is important for their reading development” (p.1). For instance, motivation when reading might help readers not only to maintain attention with enthusiasm in a text, but also might increase how we adopt and develop our reading experience.

It is important to say that people who surround readers in their environment, such as peers, family and teachers; might promote reader’s motivation. But teachers are the ones that play the most important role, since they are the ones that influence students’ development when motivating them to read (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010).

There are reading instances that have been defined as motivating, for example, according to Kragh (2008), Free Voluntary Reading is “reading for

pleasure, reading at your own pace and in your own time” (p.13). Therefore, in this case, what would motivate readers to read is the fact that as it is a voluntary action, the reader would feel enthusiasm without being pressured to read. Free reading is not an activity that needs to be commanded by another person, it is the reader who states the period or frequency of reading, and so, the time that the reader would provide or spend to read he or she would really use it with that purpose (Krashen, 2004). The concept of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) will be further addressed in section 2.2.4.

2.3 Types of Reading

There is not just one type of reading, but different authors have classified reading in several types, such as the ones that are explained below.

2.3.1. Extensive reading.

Day (2003) declares that “Extensive reading is based on the well-established premise that we learn to read by reading” (p.1). Extensive reading helps students to learn by reading in order to obtain general ideas of what is read. According to The British Council (BBC) this approach allows students to read long texts to get broad understanding but reading it with pleasure. For instance, Krashen (2004) states that “In extensive reading, a minimal amount of accountability is required, for example, a short summary of what was read” (p.2). In simple words, extensive reading allows students to obtain general ideas about the reading.

Having in mind that one of the important objectives of Extensive Reading is to teach students to read but trying to make it an enjoyable activity, using this strategy at schools, students have the possibility to select on their own the texts they would like to read based on their interest. A simple example of extensive reading would be to read long pieces of texts such as an article or a story (TKT book).

Another example of extensive reading, given by the British Council (BBC) an example of extensive reading would be that “A teacher reads a short story with learners, but does not set them any tasks except to read and listen”. Students’ role in this type of reading does not require a lot of work but to listen to the teacher and to read a short piece of information.

2.3.2. Intensive reading.

According to Brown (2001), “intensive reading is usually a classroom-oriented activity in which students focus on the linguistics or semantic details of a passage” (p.312). As it can be seen, one of the aims of intensive reading is to look for meaning of vocabulary or ideas. Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2011) explain that reading for detail or intensive reading “involves getting the meaning out of every word and out of the links or relationships between words and between sentences” (p.32). Assuming that, this strategy involves looking for meaning from specific words and ideas and finding out the relationship between them. The reader might use this strategy trying to make meaning in detail from the text in order to break down and understand it thoroughly.

Some examples of intensive reading would be to receive a letter from someone important to the reader and paying special attention to the information written in the letter (TKT book). The British Council gives us as an example of intensive reading during an activity that “The learners read a short text and put events from it into chronological order.” The role of the students would be to pay special attention to the most important events of the text and put them in order.

2.3.3. Sustained silent reading.

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) is an in-school program most commonly used nowadays. Students are allowed to read for an estimated period of time each day between 5-15 minutes (Krashen, 2004). They are supposed to read in silence and they can select what they want to read according to their interests; therefore,

students become readers loving what they do as a free activity without any evaluation (Garan & DeVoogd, 2006; Yoon, 2002).

Some studies have shown that when students are under this kind of program they really use their time to read (Krashen, 2004). Since it is one of the programs on which students become readers dedicating time to read with an estimated period of time; they really use it to concentrate themselves in a text.

2.3.4. Free voluntary reading.

In simple words, we might define Free Voluntary Reading as the action of voluntarily read and select the resources you want to examine. As Stephen Krashen states, "Free Voluntary Reading, or reading because you want to, is the kind of recreational reading that most mature readers do almost every day. In schools, this approach is often called sustained silent reading, or SSR" (Krashen, 2006, p.43). Free reading can be described as a leisure activity during which, people involved in this situation enjoy to read because they want to discover new knowledge, to recreate their mind or just to have a time to relax.

In accordance with The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) it has been concluded that reading for pleasure is even more important than social class in determining academic success. By following this statement, Free Voluntary Reading has much importance since it is well known that many people do not read with frequency because they might not want to do it, but when people read with enthusiasm and because they want to, people establish solid foundations that remain forever. This practise also helps in terms of grammar, vocabulary, communication when trying to express verbally and in writing; and it helps people to easily understand information. Bearing in mind those ideas, Stephen Krashen has declared that "free reading is extremely pleasant and results in superior general knowledge" (Krashen, 2006, p.3). This

statement seems to confirm that when reading voluntarily or for pleasure, people might tend to progress far more their learning and understanding.

According to the BBC some of the important benefits of free voluntary reading are the following:

- a) It increases sense of achievement, confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness.
- b) It widens horizons.
- c) You can do it anywhere.
- d) It develops relationships and promotes inclusion and empathy through sharing opinions and ideas.
- e) It prevents boredom and promotes relaxation.

These advantages would help the reader to improve personal aspects that participate in the process of reading, such as self-confidence. It also would give more opportunities to open the reader's world, since it allows the reader to debate, share and receive opinions; in order to establish different relationships; and one of the most comfortable of the advantages would be that the reader can decide where and how to read (Krashen, 2004).

Having in mind all of those advantages, free voluntary reading helps the reader to improve in some important aspects of the reader's life, not only personality, but also in his or her environment and relationship with society.

2.3 Reading Comprehension Strategies

There are some reading comprehension strategies that help readers to improve their reading comprehension in accordance with the information they want to know and find from a text. In the following section, these strategies are further explained.

2.3.1. Scanning.

In simple words, scanning means “quickly searching for particular pieces of information in a text” (Brown, p.308). Harmer (2001) explains that “readers are capable of checking spelling when they try to look for specific information in a text.” (p.69). When scanning, readers do not look in detail to every word or every piece of information; they try to get a general idea or to look for specific information from the text instead.

Reading for specific information or scanning involves not reading the entire text, it is only necessary to look at a glance to the text and find the information that readers are interested to find

According to the TKT book an example of scanning would be “to look for a number in a telephone directory”. (Spratt, Pulverness & Williams, 2011, p.32).

In other words to scan implies to look for specific information, therefore the reader would have an objective that might be to find a particular piece of information.

2.3.2. Skimming.

On the contrary, Skimming is to obtain a general idea of what is read (Harmer, 2001); Brown (2001) states that “skimming consists of quickly running one’s eyes across a whole text” (p.301). Therefore, the reader at the moment of reading might look quickly at the text in order to get an overview of the text. When readers skim they are interested to obtain a global understanding from the text; then they look in a rapid manner at the text in order to know if they might be interested in keep on reading. Some of the advantages of skimming are that the reader is able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic or message, and some supporting ideas (Brown, 2001).

According to the TKT book, skimming would be “when you look quickly through a book in a bookshop to decide if you want to buy it, or when you go quickly through a reference book to decide which part will help you write an essay,

or a glance at a newspaper article to see if it is worth reading in detail” (p.32). These examples refer to the reader looking for some interesting information in accordance with their interest.

2.4 The Present Study

Based on the revised literature in terms of the importance of the development of reading comprehension skills, supported by the national standards for measuring reading comprehension in students, the present study aims to examine the possible effects of Reading Comprehension Strategies and Free Voluntary Reading on student’s reading skills and perceptions about reading by providing a learner with training on reading comprehension strategies and also opportunities to freely select texts of personal interest. By doing this, we intend to show the possible influence that either strategies or free reading on their own or together could have over the learner’s development and perceptions about reading.

In order to answer to this query, the following research questions were formed:

1. Does the training on Reading Strategies affect reading comprehension skills?
2. Does Free Voluntary Reading have an impact on the reading comprehension skills?
3. How does FVR affect the participant’s perceptions of reading in comparison with the training on Reading Strategies?

3. METHODOLOGY

All through this chapter, the important elements that compose the methodological design will be presented in detail; including the type of research design, the methodology that was used, the context of the study, the participants' selection, the intervention process and procedures and the data collection instruments. All these elements will be explained and described to give a general idea of how the study was conducted and put into practice.

3.1 Overall Design

The present study uses the guidelines of a Mixed Method Research, following an embedded design. According to Creswell (2012):

The purpose of the embedded design is to collect quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously or sequentially, but to have one form of data play a supportive role to the other form of data. The reason for collecting the second form of data is that it augments or supports the primary form of data. The supportive data may be either qualitative or quantitative, but most examples in the literature support adding qualitative data into a quantitative design. (Creswell, 2012, p.445)

In the case of the present study, the primary form of data corresponds to quantitative data obtained from a set of 3 tests (pre, post and delayed posttest), which main purpose was to examine the possible effects of reading strategies and free reading on reading comprehension skills development. The second source of data, which goal is to support the primary set, corresponds to qualitative data obtained from an interview, which intended to explore the perceptions of the participant towards the effects of reading strategies and free reading.

3.2 Context

This study was conducted in a subsidized school in Santiago, Chile. The school is of a humanistic type that imparts subjects such as math, sciences, history, technology, music, P.E, and English, among others. The total number of students in the institution is of 980. This school has a large number of students with scholarships and benefits for families with low income. The majority of the students come from middle-class households, and there are differences regarding the level of education among the parents.

The research was carried out in a ninth grade. The ninth grade corresponded to a large class of 45 students; and had five hours of English per week (divided in 3 sessions); two sessions of 45 minutes and one of 90 minutes. The English department consists of four English teachers, the English teacher of the ninth grade is also the head of the English department.

The classes consist of activities taken from the course book English in Mind, which is not the one given by the Ministry of Education, but it is afforded by tutors. Students read two books a year for the English class as mandatory, plus the regular activities planned by the English teacher.

3.3 Participants

The participant of this study is one female student from 9th grade. The reason of having just one participant involved in the intervention is that she was the only student who voluntarily decided to be part of an English workshop held every Wednesday after class (from 16:00 to 17:00) could be part of the study, since these were the policies imposed by the school in order to allow students to be part of the research study. Besides that, this female student was the only one who attended all 7 sessions of the workshop (out of a total of 5 initial participants of the workshop), consequently, she was the only one who took all 3 tests (pre, post and delayed posttest) and could also be interviewed.

Throughout this thesis study we will refer to this participant as 'Valery'.

3.4 Data collection instruments

The instruments that were used for collecting the necessary data included a pretest, a posttest and a delayed posttest, all of which were respectively applied during weeks 1, 4 and 6. Besides this, an interview to the participant was conducted during week 7.

3.4.1. Pre and post-tests.

All tests have a similar structure in order to be able to compare results at the end of the intervention, constructed with four sections or items.

3.4.1.1 Pre-test

This test was used to assess the level of reading comprehension of the participant. The test was constructed from one story taken from a book that contained a series of short stories. For the selection of this text the participant's interest were not considered, since the purpose of this test was to assess the student on her reading comprehension skills before she was trained on how to use reading comprehension strategies and also before she was given the freedom to select a text of her interest to be read.

The pre-test was composed of four sections, each of which was aimed to assess the participant reading comprehension skills, and it was taken during week 1 of the intervention process.

3.4.1.2 Post-test

The post-test was similar to the pre-test in that they both had the same number of sections and similar items. However, as the post-test was taken from week 4 of the intervention, after the participant had received training on reading comprehension strategies for two weeks, the intention of this post-test was to assess the learner on the effect of the reading comprehension strategies over her

reading comprehension skills. Same as with the pre-test, the post-test did not consider the participant's interest.

3.4.1.3 Delayed post-test

The delayed post-test followed the same characteristics of pre- and post-test in terms of structure, but in this case the participant's interest were taken into account as she was given the opportunity to select a test of her interest and read it for two weeks before she was tested on week sixth. In this case what was intended to be assessed were the possible effects that free voluntary reading could had have over the participants reading comprehension skills.

3.4.2 Interview

A final interview was done in the sixth session of the workshop (week 6) before the delayed post-test was applied in which the participant was asked about her perceptions about the workshop and the experience of reading a text chosen by her, and also if the reading comprehension strategies had helped her improve in some aspect.

3.5 Intervention

The intervention started during the second semester of the school year. After all students of the ninth grade were invited to participate in a reading comprehension workshop, which consisted of 7 session and was held at the school once a week after classes for one chronological hour.

As Figure 3.1 shows, the intervention started with a pre-test on the first week. In the following two sessions reading comprehension strategies were taught to the participant in order to assess the possible effects of this strategies during week 4 with a post-test.

The reading comprehension strategies on which the participant was trained were the two reviewed in the Literature chapter; Skimming and Scanning. The

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

participant was taught how to go through a text looking a general idea in order to get a global understanding (Skimming), and also how to look for specific information in detail (Scanning). After the two weeks of training, she sat for the post-test.

In week five the learner was told she could choose any text she would like to read and that she would be given the freedom to read whenever and wherever she wanted to. After this text was chosen she was tested again in week seven with a delayed post-test. This time, was intended to measure were the effects of Free Voluntary Reading on Reading Comprehension.

In week six, after the student had been assessed on pre- post- test, she was asked to participate in an interview in which the questions were related to the impact of the intervention. During the interview the learner was engaged in a semi structured interview in which she was prompted to talk about the texts she had read, the experience she had had participating in the workshop and the benefits of the aspects she had learned in relation to reading in her academic activities

In week seven, the student was asked to complete a delayed post test constructed from the first chapter of the book chosen by her.

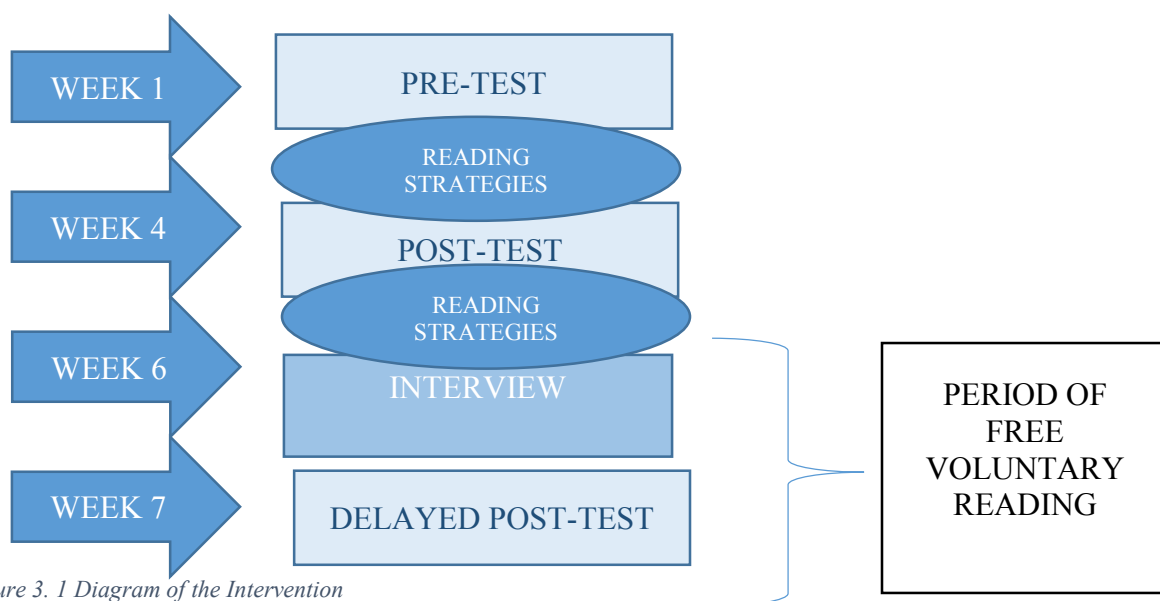


Figure 3. 1 Diagram of the Intervention

3.6 Intervention Methodology

The intervention consisted in the implementation of an English Reading Workshop which main objective was to train student to develop her reading skills in English and provide her with Free Voluntary Reading experience.

The workshop was implemented throughout 7 lessons of 1 hour each during the second semester of the school year. The original number of participants from the 9th grade was 5, but that number decreased throughout the period of intervention coming down to one participant in order to have reliable results, all participants who missed sessions or did not sit for a test had to be excluded from the study.

The lessons in general consisted in the introduction of a new Reading Comprehension Strategy during 2 sessions (2 and 3), also checking if the students remembered the previous one. All this based on reading texts and completing activities in order to put the strategies into practice. Then, during sessions 5- 6- 7 the participant was allowed to choose a text of her interest to freely read.

4. RESULTS

In this chapter, the results obtained in pre, post and delayed post-test; as well as in the interview to the participant are presented, analysed and explained in graphs. The results were distributed with the purpose of making a comparison between them in accordance with the student's performance in the pre- test, post-test and delayed post- test; to finally demonstrate student's achievement all the way through the process in relation to the possible effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies and free voluntary reading. In the case of the interview, its purpose was to reveal the perceptions of the participant, also in relation to the effects of reading comprehension strategies and free voluntary reading.

4.1 The Pre-test

Pre- test was implemented the first week of the workshop. The student who participated in the workshop was told to read a short text called "Can Helen Escape?" and then to answer the four sections in the test. Pre-test will be represented with a graph explaining the result that the participant obtained in percentages.

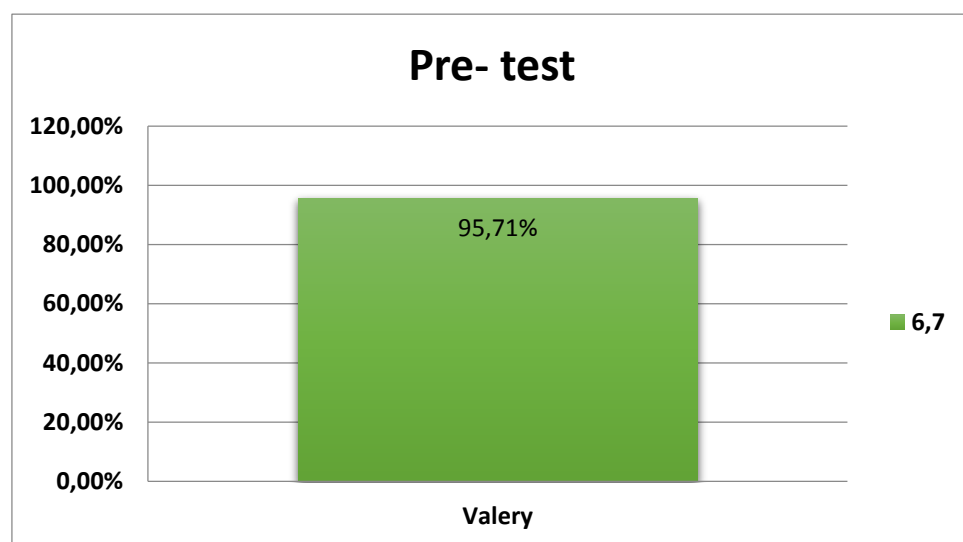


Figure 4. 1 Pre-test Results

The Pre- test results represent the percentage that the participant obtained in accordance with the grade. Valery obtained a 6.7 and averaged a percentage of 95.7%. It is important to mention that the participant was 4.3% far from achieving the maximum percentage in this test.

4.2 Post- test

The Post- test was implemented on the fourth week of intervention. It was elaborated as the pre- test, including the same number of items and similar sections, but based on a different text called “Raimundo Sánchez- Superstar”. The graph below shows the result in percentage that the participant obtained.

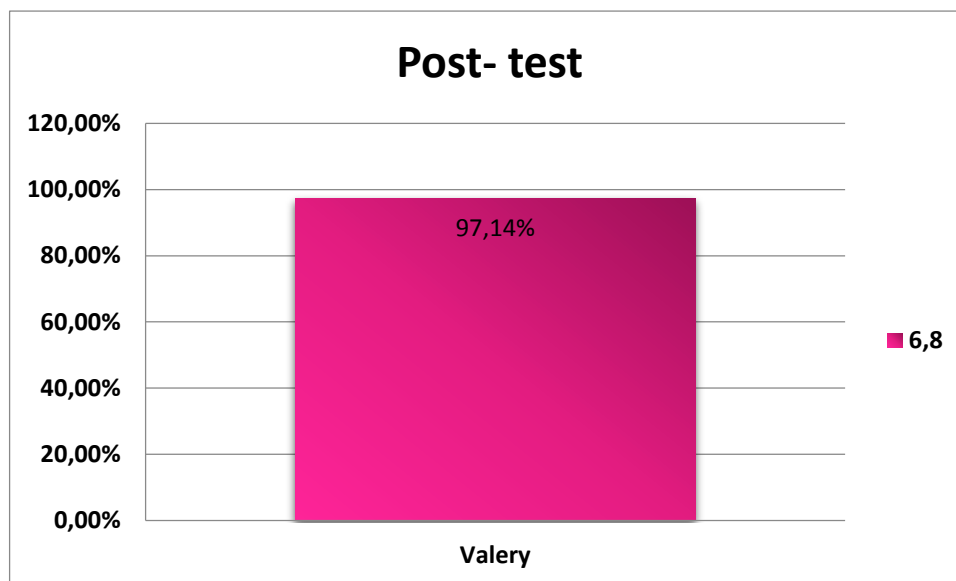


Figure 4. 2 Results Post-test

The results of the post-test represent the percentage that the student scored in accordance with the grade obtained. Valery, the participant, obtained a 6.8 and averaged a percentage of 97.1%. In this opportunity, she showed an increase of 1.4 % in relation to the Pre- test, and this time she was 2.9% away for the maximum percentage to be scored.

4.3 Delayed Post-test

Delayed Post- test was implemented the last week of the workshop. It was similar to Pre and Post -test but with an important difference, that the participant was asked to read a text in accordance with her interest, which means that the student had the opportunity to choose it. In this particular instance the student read “Twilight”.

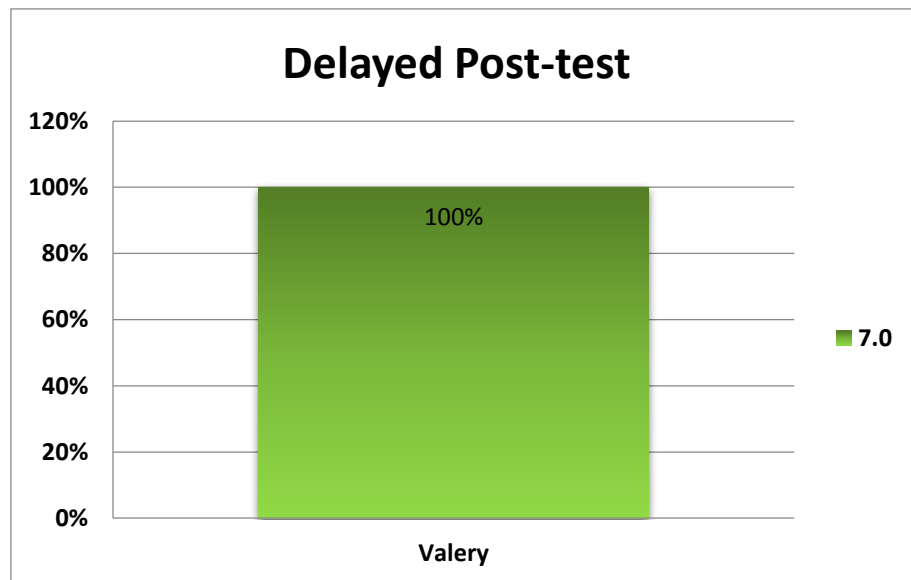


Figure 4. 3 Results Delayed Post-Test

Delayed Post- test result represents the percentage that the student obtained in accordance with the grade. Valery obtained a grade of 7 and averaged a percentage of 100%. It is important to mention that in this opportunity the participant read the text in accordance with her pleasure and that she acquired the highest grade and percentage.

4.4 Overall Gains

In order to make a comparison of the three tests that the participant was asked to answer during the Workshop, the following lineal graph will represent Valery's gain results among Pre, Post and Delayed post-tests.

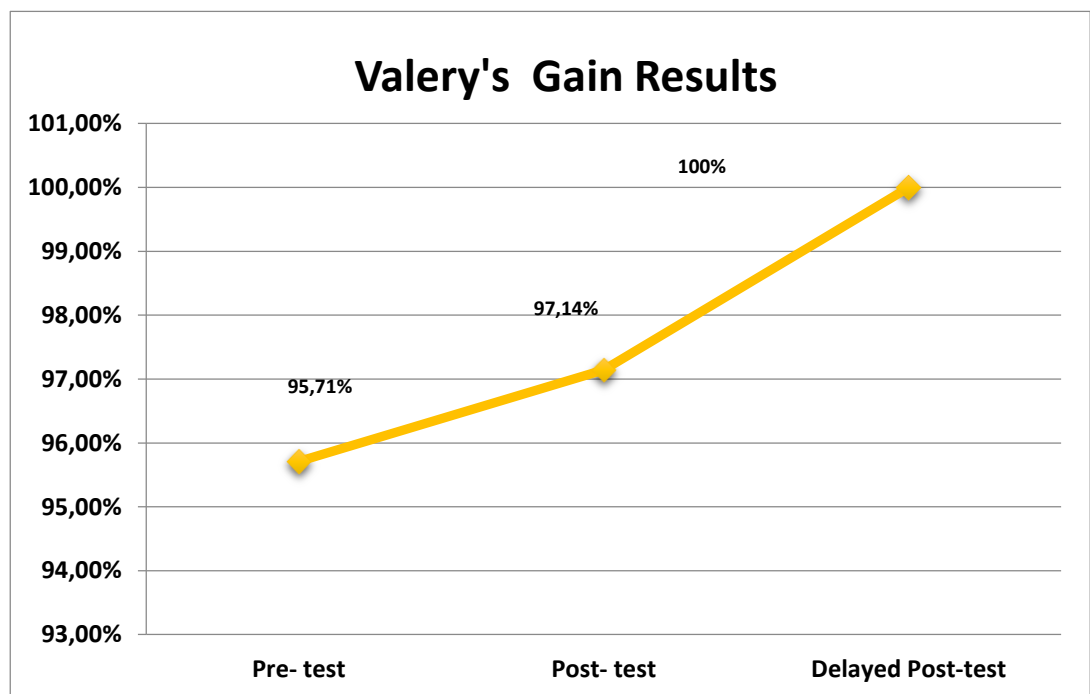


Figure 4. 4 Overall gains

Pre, Post and Delayed Post tests were applied during the workshop; the information is represented in percentages. In Pre- test Valery averaged a percentage of 95%, in Post- test averaged a percentage of 97%, and in Delayed Post-test averaged a percentage of 100%. Considering the information the lowest percentage the participant obtained was 95.7%, which corresponds to Pre- test; and the highest percentage that she obtained was 100%, which belongs to Delayed Post- test. Valery's performance was significant because she maintained a good level throughout the workshop.

4.5 Interview Results

The qualitative data obtained from the interview was analyzed and organized to be presented in the following table, which includes the participant's perceptions about reading comprehension in relation to Reading Strategies and Free Voluntary Reading.

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you feel about reading in English?

Valery: I like reading English and it makes me feel intelligent!

Interviewer: Do you feel more intelligent reading in English?

Valery: Ah yes, I do."

Interviewer: Good... Ehm! Okay! In the workshop I have told you a few strategies or techniques to read in English. Have they worked for you and helped you?

Valery: The workshop helped me because every time I need I go over my notes in English and also read better in English."

Interviewer: and also your grades improved?

Valery: yes.

Table 4. 1 Perceptions about Reading

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Valery, the participant, was asked about the perceptions she had about Reading Comprehension and how she felt when reading in English. In the quotes illustrated in the previous table it can be appreciated that when she was asked about how she felt when reading, she expressed that even though reading in English is difficult she likes it and that she feels intelligent when she is able to do it.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The effectiveness of Reading Comprehension Strategies on the development of reading Comprehension skills

Reading Comprehension Strategies are ways to approach the action of reading in order to comprehend what someone reads, and each strategy has its own objective such as in Skimming, whose objective “is to obtain a general idea of what is read” (Harmer, 2001, p.202), whereas Scanning involves “quickly searching for particular pieces of information in a text” (Brown, 2001, p.301). This study was respectively based on these two reading comprehension strategies. The participant was trained on how to use the two of them in order to help her improve and develop her reading comprehension skills. In order to analyze the effects of Reading Comprehension Strategies on the development of reading skills, post-test results, which aimed at assessing the impact that reading strategies could have over the participant’s reading skills, showed that those two strategies did help Valery to understand better the text according to what was exemplified in the results chapter. In agreement with the Post-test results, it can be said that those strategies are effective and that it is not necessary to read texts in detail to know them, but looking for specific information or general ideas. Scanning will make the reader looking at a glance to find the information that the he or she is interested in (Spratt, Pulverness & Williams, 2011); and Skimming getting a general idea of the text (Harmer, 2001). They are effective strategies because they allow the reader to develop skills such as predicting. Some of the advantages of skimming are that the reader is able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic or message, and some supporting ideas (Brown, 2001). Skimming and Scanning can be of great use for standardized tests, for example SIMCE; as students have to read long texts using these strategies will help them to save time.

Based on these findings it is possible to answer our first research question: Does the training on Reading Strategies affect reading comprehension skills? We can say that the training on reading strategies caused a positive effect on the participant's reading comprehension skills. However, this improvement reflected in the post-test results was not significant in its gains, since the results of the pretest were also high. The latter cannot be explained with the data that we collected with our instruments; nevertheless, (maybe it was caused because in spite of what we thought at the beginning regarding the level of reading skills of the participant that she had poor reading skills because of the results of her regular reading tests at school), the fact of she enrolling voluntarily in the reading workshop made her change her attitude and be more motivated. Because the intervention was a voluntary action, the participant felt motivated since it was an activity without pressures and she could select what she wanted to read (Krashen, 2004). Reader's Motivation is important in the process of reading since it is through it that reading development may exist. How we adopt and develop reading has to do with how motivated readers feel (McGeown, 2013).

5.2 The effectiveness of Free Voluntary Reading on the development of reading Comprehension skills.

After the results of the delayed post-test, which intended to measure the effects of FVR, were analyzed, it can be seen that there was an improvement in the reading comprehension skills of the participant, since according to the results she was able to completely understand the text she was tested on. This can be explained because when the motivation and interest are present, the act of reading becomes easier to the reader to understand, and ultimately learn new vocabulary and expressions. When reading is practiced with pleasure it has as a result a more advanced knowledge (Krashen, 2004). One of the advantages of FVR proposed by the BBC is that "You can do it anywhere". That is why Valery could choose to read whenever she was and at her own pace. "Free Voluntary

Reading, or reading because you want to, is the kind of recreational reading that most mature readers do almost every day. In schools, this approach is often called sustained silent reading, or SSR” (Krashen, 2004, p.43). As this intervention was more inclined to follow the Free Voluntary Reading Approach, the fact that the participant could choose what she wanted to read increased the motivation of her to read in English, this freedom is not encouraged in the school system; even though, the school counts with a library it does not have the titles students seek to read, so the opportunity and freedom to choose and that a teacher would listen her concerns and preferences adds more to the motivation to read.

With the support of the above we can answer our second research question: Does Free Voluntary Reading have an impact on the reading comprehension skills? We can claim that FVR does have a positive effect over reading comprehension skills according to Valery’s results in the delayed post-test in which she obtained 100% of achievement. These results show that it might be possible to say that when readers read voluntarily they can have a good performance, due to the strong motivation they feel when they can choose what they want to do. Maybe this intervention should not be necessary in Schools where students can choose how they learn such as a Montessori School.

However, since the participant already knew the two reading strategies; skimming and scanning, the claim possible to be made is that FVR works as an enhancer to what other strategies could do in the development of reading comprehension skills. We cannot assume though, whether FVR itself could cause in an isolated form the same effects that it had when it was measured as an additional variable, as it was in the present study.

5.3 Perceptions about Reading Comprehension Strategies and Free Voluntary Reading

During the interview, the participant did not refer explicitly to the benefits that either reading strategies or FVR had had in the development of her reading skills, but she mentioned the benefits in general. This is because she was not asked about the strategies in particular because she was not taught how to define the strategies, but how to use them. That is why the interview results revealed that her perceptions about reading in general were positive, as she mentioned that the workshop had helped her at times to have better comprehension when reading. She also mentions that she felt more intelligent when reading in English although it was difficult for her to read in a second language. Besides, she added that her grades at school had also improved thanks to the reading workshop.

In accordance with the above, The BBC mentions as an advantage of FVR that “it increases sense of achievement, confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness” (British Council, 2009), which may explain the reasons why our participant improved, since probably she felt more confident with herself and her own capabilities.

Also, according to the TKT book, for which motivation is “thoughts and feelings which make us want to continue to want to do something and which turn our wishes into action” (Spratt, Pulverness and Williams, 2011), the fact that the participant could choose what to read could have had an impact on her school work in English class, improving her grades in the subject.

In order to answer our last research question: How does FVR affect the participant’s perceptions of reading in comparison with the training on Reading Strategies?, the first important thing to say is that for the participant there was no difference between these two concept when she responded the interview. However, she had positive perception in general regarding the concept of reading. Because of this it is possible to say that both, reading strategies and

free voluntary reading affected positively the perceptions of the participant of this study by making her feel more intelligent when reading even though her conception of the language was of a high difficulty. Despite the positive impact, it is not possible to differentiate and compare the effects on one over the other, since the participant did not make it clear in her responses.

5.4 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

As the main focus of the study were Reading strategies and FVR, the participants had to join the workshop voluntarily, which gave us limited participants because the students in the school in general are not interested in Reading, whether it is in English or in Spanish. At the beginning there was a group of more than 10 students who were interested in participating in the workshop. Because of the fact that it implied to stay after classes, the group reduced to four students, therefore; the study was based on only one participant, who was Valery; since she attended to all of the seven classes, and was present for all the tests, the rest of the participants were missing lessons for personal reasons.

Also, the school had too many activities during the period of the intervention, this added to the national holidays; such as Teacher's day, School Anniversary, Patriotic week, among others, so the time for the workshop had to be shortened in terms of sessions. At the beginning it was thought to have a number of fifteen sessions and because of the activities it was reduced to a number of seven.

We suggest conducting the study on the first semester of the year, and hopefully to be included in the English teaching planning in order that the teacher can find a suitable place, such as the library, for the readers to have a comfortable and quiet place to read. Since the interventions were after classes, sometimes there was too much noise outside having as a consequence

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

student's distraction. Besides, we were not allowed to do the workshop during regular class time having as a consequence a reduced number of participants.

It is important to ask the school for permission to include these hours of free voluntary reading to the English planning, so that for those students who did not participate, because it implied to stay at school after classes, will be able to stay and use FVR for their development of reading comprehension skills.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Our study confirmed the general notion that reading is a skill neglected in the Chilean School system and that most of the students will not read unless they get a grade for it. This is confirmed by the results obtained in the SIMCE results was of 51 points out of a maximum of 70 points in 2010; whereas in 2012 the score was of 48 points. The OECD placed Chile 51st in relation with reading comprehension skills, compared to other OECD countries. There is something causing a decrease in reading comprehension. But not all hope is lost, since introducing a program or a workshop in which the students can read what they want to read can help them improve in their English learning process.

After conducting our intervention we can conclude that permitting students to choose what they want to read can improve their interest in reading, but it needs to be in a way that a teacher can help them improve their reading skills. And once a workshop is planned it should be integrated in the English normal lessons so that they can support each other, and allow the students benefit from this intellectual exchange from normal English lessons that can be more grammar or communicative-centered and any new ideas or knowledge that students can extract from reading.

As the participants of this study were selected from a 9th grade, the students are around 14 or 15 years old, adolescents who need to develop responsibility and be able to work on their own, but they still need a guide (a teacher) to show them the way they need to work. Also this was a large class (45 students), so the small group of the workshop allowed the teacher to have a more individual work with each student and their personal difficulties.

Given students the chance to have their interest taken into account helped them improve their motivation to do activities they do not like to do very much such as reading. Reading is an activity they are obligated to do in school, but giving them the choice of the kind of book they would like to read gives them the impression that they have some control over their learning process.

REFERENCES

- Bases Curriculares 2012: Idioma Extranjero Inglés. (2012, January 1). Retrieved October 9, 2014, from http://www.curriculumenlineamineduc.cl/605/articles-21319_programa.pdf
- British Council. (2009, December 8). Extensive reading: Why it is good for our students... and for us. Retrieved August 10, 2014, from <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/extensive-reading-why-it-good-our-students...-us>
- Brown, H. (2001). Chapter 18: Teaching Reading. In *Teaching by principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Cambridge. (n.d.). English definition of "reading" Retrieved August 10, 2014, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/reading?q=Reading>
- Cline, F., Johnstone, C., and King, T (2006). Reading: *Focus group reactions to three definitions of reading (as originally developed in support of NARAP goal 1)*. Minneapolis, MN: National Accessible Reading Assessment Projects.
- Creswell, J. (2012). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (2nd ed., p. 445). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Day, R. R. and J. Bamford. (1998). Extensive reading in the second language classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Day, R. R. and J. Bamford. (2002). Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language* 14/2.

<http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/October2002/>

Day, R. (2003, January 1). What is Extensive Reading? Retrieved October 15, 2014, from <http://www.cape.edu/docs/TTalk0021.pdf>

Dutcher, P. (1990). *Authentic reading assessment*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation.

Harmer, J. (2007). Motivation. In *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson Longman.

Hirsch, E. (2007, January 1). CEP, Centro de Estudios Públicos, Chile :: Nuestro archivo digital. Retrieved August 7, 2014, from

http://www.cepchile.cl/2_4060/doc/reading_comprehension_requires_knowledge_of_words_and_the_world.html

How it Works: Vocabulary.com. (n.d.). Retrieved September 15, 2014, from <http://www.vocabulary.com/howitworks/>

Krashen, S. (2004). I.- The Research. In *The power of reading: Insights from the research* (2nd ed.). Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited.

Krashen, S. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

McGeown, S. (2013). *Reading motivation and engagement in the primary*

classroom: Theory, research and practice. (p. 1). Leicester: United Kingdom Literacy Association.

Meyer, S. (2005). 1. FIRST SIGHT. In *Twilight*. New York: LITTLE, BROWN and COMPANY.

PISA. (2013, December 2). Informe PISA: América Latina retrocede en comprensión de lectura, matemática y ciencias | Informe PISA, PISA 2012. Retrieved August 7, 2014, from <http://www.infobae.com/2013/12/02/1527987-informe-pisa-america-latina-retrocede-comprension-lectura-matematica-y-ciencias>

Serafini, F. (2012, April 1). Taking Full Advantage of Children's Literature. Retrieved September 14, 2014, from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/TRTR.01067/abstract;jsessionid=E558D67904C9BA30495A3849D88FEB0D.f01t04?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false>

Reading. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/>

Snow, K. E. (2002) *Reading for Understanding*. Santa Mónica, RAND (p.1-17).

Spratt, M., Pulverness, A., & Williams, M. (2011). Unit 9: Motivation. In *The TKT course: Teaching knowledge test: Modules 1, 2 and 3* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ur, P. (1999). *A course in language teaching: Trainee book* (pp. 324- 429). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Ulmer, C., Timothy, M., Brecaw, L., Gilbert, S., Holleman, J., & Hunting, M.

(n.d.). Creating Games as Reader Response and Comprehension

Assessment. Retrieved September 14, 2014, from

http://americanreadingforum.org/yearbook/yearbooks/02_yearbook/pdf/16_Ulmer_et al_revised.pdf

APPENDIX A

LESSON PLAN 1

School Name: Colegio Sagrado Corazón de La Reina

Class: 9th grade Reading Comprehension Workshop

Number of Students: 4 students

Time: 16.00– 17.00

Date: Lesson 2

<p>Main Objective: by the end of the class students will be able to: understand the difference between two important reading strategies, Skimming and Scanning; and use them.</p> <p>Learning outcome (s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the difference between Skimming and Scanning. - Practice the two reading strategies. <p>Key Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read a short text. 			
Stages	What the teacher does	Interaction	Materials-Timing
Warm-up/Engage	Show a video with a brief explanation about Skimming and Scanning. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRIRk_9Zg9Y	Teacher-students	Data-show Speakers Notebook 5-10 min
Study/Presentation	Explain the use of Skimming and Scanning.	Teacher-students	Whiteboard Markers 5-10 min
Practice	Read short story.	Students-students	Short story 15-20 min
Activate/production	Practice the use of Skimming and Scanning. Get the general idea of the story and look for specific information.	Students-Teacher	10-15 min
Close-up/ Wrap-up	Share with your classmates opinions about the two strategies. Are they useful to understand better a text?	Students-students	10-15 min

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

LESSON PLAN 2

School Name: Colegio Sagrado Corazón de La Reina

Class: 9th grade Reading Comprehension Workshop

Number of Students:

Time: 16.00– 17.00

Date: Lesson 3

<p>Main Objective: by the end of the class students will be able to: use a web page to practice new vocabulary.</p> <p>Learning outcome (s): learning new vocabulary</p> <p>Key Activities: login in to www.vocabulary.com and write down the new vocabulary.</p>			
Stages	What the teacher does	Interaction	Materials-Timing
Warm-up/Engage	<p>The teacher shows how the web page works.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zj6IS0XdCQo</p>	Teacher-students	Data-show Speakers Notebook 10-15 min
Study/ Presentation	From the previews short stories we have read, students help me to create a list of new vocabulary.	Teacher-students	Short stories Whiteboard Markers 5-10 min
Practice	Students create an account in the vocabulary.com and create a list. They also practice with the web page the new vocabulary.	Students-students	15-20 min
Activate/production	In group we will see if we learned the words using the web page	Students-Teacher	10-15 min
Close-up/ Wrap-up	Share with your classmates opinions about the strategy.	Students-students	5 min

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

LESSON PLAN 3

School Name: Colegio Sagrado Corazón de La Reina

Class: 9th grade Reading Comprehension Workshop

Number of Students:

Time: 16.00– 17.00

Date: Lesson 4

Stages	What the teacher does	Interaction	Materials-Timing
Warm-up/Engage	Explain the two reading types: Intensive and Extensive.	Teacher-students	Notebook 5-10 min
Study/ Presentation	Explain some strategies and purposes of intensive or extensive reading.	Teacher-students	Whiteboard Markers 5-10 min
Practice	Read a short story and practice the use of Intensive.	Students-students	story 15-20 min
Activate/production	Look for specific language structures from the text. Example: the text uses simple past.	Students-teacher	10-15 min
Close-up/ Wrap-up	Students say which book they would like to read for pleasure	Students-teacher	10-15 min

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

LESSON PLAN 4

School Name: Colegio Sagrado Corazón de La Reina

Class: 9th grade Reading Comprehension Workshop

Number of Students:

Time: 16.00– 17.00

Date: Lesson 5

<p>Main Objective: by the end of the class students will be able to: understand the difference and the benefits of Free Voluntary Reading and Sustained Silent Reading</p> <p>Learning outcome (s): understand that any act of reading can help them improve their reading skills.</p> <p>Key Activities: Class discussion about Free Voluntary Reading and the book they are going to read.</p>			
Stages	What the teacher does	Interaction	Materials-Timing
Warm-up/Engage	Show a video about Free Voluntary Reading by Krashen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTM8pOSXyeI Sustained Silent Reading Rules https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0cOmu6HdC4	Teacher-students	Notebook 5-10 min
Study/ Presentation	Read the first chapter of your book. Use the time wisely	Teacher-students	Whiteboard Markers 5-10 min
Practice	Write down any new vocabulary you encounter.	Students-students	book 15-20 min
Activate/production	Complete a fact-file of your book. Title, Genre, the 5 main characters, write down 3 events that happen in this chapter.	Students-Students	10-15 min
Close-up/ Wrap-up	Write down all the new words from your book and upload them to the vocabulary.com web page and read more at home if you like.	Students-students	10-15 min

APPENDIX B

PRE-TEST

CAN HELEN ESCAPE?



Name: _____ Date: _____

I. ARE THESE STATEMENTS **TRUE (T) OR FALSE (F)**? CORRECT THE FALSE ONES.

1. _____ Helen is preparing to go on holiday with Gary.

2. _____ Helen's mother makes all the decisions in the house.

3. _____ Helen's brother is seventeen.

4. _____ Helen knows how old Gary is.

5. _____ Helen doesn't think about the future with Gary.

(10 points)

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

II. MATCH THE **EVENTS** WITH THE **TIMES**:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 3.00 a.m. | Her parents' door opens. |
| 3.25 a.m. | Helen is going to meet Gary. |
| 3.30 a.m. | Helen hears her parents talking. |
| 3.40 a.m. | Helen is preparing her suitcase. |
| 3.45 a.m. | Helen's father opens and closes the window again. |
| 3.50 a.m. | Helen leaves the house. |
| 4.00 a.m. | Helen closes the suitcase. |

(7 points)

III. WHAT DO YOU THINK HELEN DECIDED TO DO **AT THE END OF THE STORY**? INVENT THE ENDING

IN 1 PARAGRAPH.

(10 points)

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

IV. MATCH THE FOLLOWING PHRASES WITH THE CORRESPONDING PERSON FROM THE STORY.

HELEN – HELEN'S FATHER – HELEN'S MOTHER - HELEN'S BROTHER- HELEN'S BEST FRIEND - GARY

1 ...but I can go out when I want to, because I am a boy.

2 He doesn't think my opinions are important. He always makes the decisions in our marriage, and I listen to him.

3 He is stupid! Modern girls don't go home at 6 o'clock!

4 I know him and his family. They are not nice people. He is too old for her - she is only 16, but she thinks she is an adult.

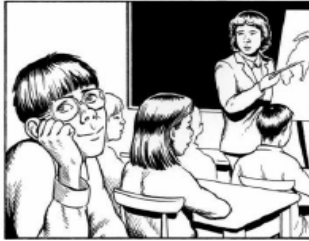
5 _____
All my friends can go out and visit each other. But my house is a prison!

6 She can't come out with us, and we can't visit her in her house.

POST-TEST

RAIMUNDO SÁNCHEZ

-SUPERSTAR



Name: _____ Date: _____

I. ARE THESE STATEMENTS **TRUE (T) OR FALSE (F)**? CORRECT THE **FALSE** ONES.

1. ___ His mother and father are in the room when he accepts his Oscar.

2. ___ Raimundo gets two goals in the World Cup final.

3. ___ Raimundo likes talking to Inés.

4. ___ Mrs Guillamas thinks Raimundo doesn't have a lot of imagination.

5. ___ The other boys and girls think that Raimundo is very funny.

(10 points)

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

II. MATCH THE **VERBS** WITH THE **NOUNS**:

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| to get | a goal |
| to win | a person |
| to discover | a bank |
| to rob | a door |
| to lock | a football match |
| to hit | a country |

(6 points)

III. WHAT HAPPENS IN RAIMUNDO'S LAST DREAM ABOUT **THE SPACE MISSION TO VENUS**? FINISH THE STORY IN **ONE PARAGRAPH**.

(6 points)

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

IV. MATCH THE FOLLOWING **PHRASES** WITH THE CORRESPONDING **PERSON** FROM THE STORY.

MRS. GUILLAMAS / CRIMINAL / RAIMUNDO'S CLASSMATE / INÉS / RAIMUNDO / THE PRESENTER

1. 'Who can remember when Columbus discovered America? Raimundo! What do you think?'

2. 'I wanted to say George Washington. He was the first president of the United States. And Washington DC is the capital city.'

3. ...the question was about Christopher Columbus.

4. ...This man is going to kill me! Who can help me?'

5. 'I'm going to give you the girl and drive away, and you are going to telephone the police immediately from your car.'

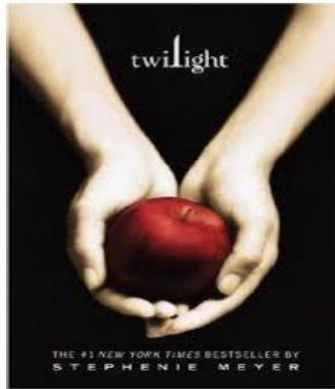
6. 'Ladies and gentlemen*, can I have your attention, please?'

(6 points)

DELAYED POST-TEST

TWILIGHT

By Stephenie Meyer



Name: _____ Date: _____

I. ARE THESE STATEMENTS **TRUE (T) OR FALSE (F)**? CORRECT THE **FALSE** ONES.
(10 points)

1. _____ The name of the town she was going to move in was called Seattle.

2. _____ Charlie is the Police Chief.

3. _____ Bella's Mom lives in Texas.

4. _____ Bella thought that she would never come back to Forks.

5. _____ Bella is loves her new town that has a warm a lovely weather.

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

II. MATCH THE STATEMENTS WITH THE CHARACTER THAT SAID IT. (8 points)

BELLA (ISABELLA SWAN)– CHARLIE – BELLA’S MOM - ERIC-

“Bella, you don’t have to do this”

“It’ll be great. I love you, mom”

“It’s good to see you, Bells”

“I’m headed toward building four, I could show you the way...”

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

II. MATCH THE STATEMENTS WITH THE CHARACTER THAT SAID IT. (8 points)

BELLA (ISABELLA SWAN)– CHARLIE – BELLA’S MOM - ERIC-

“Bella, you don’t have to do this”

“It’ll be great. I love you, mom”

“It’s good to see you, Bells”

“I’m headed toward building four, I could show you the way...”

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW

Teacher: Okay, now we are going to start our focus group [...] reading workshop. So, Valentina, can you tell me what book are you reading?. What book are you reading?. Okay, Alexandra can you tell me your book, the book that are you reading?.

Alexandra: I'm reading *Divergent*.

Teacher: *Divergent*, can you tell us about, what is the book about?

Alexandra: The books?

Teacher: So there's more than one. How many books are they?

Alexandra: Four.

Teacher: Four books!, okay!

Alexandra: *Divergent*, *Insurgent* [...]

Teacher: Okay! So, what is the first book about?

Alexandra: *Divergent*.

Teacher: *Divergent*, is about? I know it is about a girl

Alexandra: A girl is [...]

Teacher: [...] and who else? Okay! There is something interesting about the world she lives in, what happens? There are factions.

Alexandra: Yes, *Abnegation*, *Erudition*, and... I don't remember.

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Teacher: Okay but in which faction is Tris in, she is in [...] but at beginning of the book, in what faction is she?

Alexandra: Abnegation.

Teacher: And what happens in this faction?

Alexandra: em, in this faction people help other people

Teacher: Okay, So there're like a test she has to go through to see if she continues in Abnegation, right?

Alexandra: Yes, but she is Divergent.

Teacher: What is Divergent?

Alexandra: she *have* all factions

Teacher: she could be in any of the factions.

Alexandra: Yes!

Teacher: Okay, thank you!

Alexandra: You're welcome!

Teacher: Valery, can you tell us about your book? *The book that are you reading.*

Valery: emm... Reading?

Teacher: what are you reading? The name of the book. Twilight!

Valery: *Eso Twilight, es que le iba a decir Twiling.*

Teacher: Okay! Valery, can you tell me about Twilight? Please, what is Twilight about?

Valery: *No sé cómo decirlo en Ingles.*

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Teacher: Okay, tell me in Spanish

Valery: *Se trata de una adolescente, no igual es más grandecita; tiene como 18 años, y se supone que la mamá va a acompañar como al pololo, y ella tiene que irse a vivir con el papá a una ciudad muy apartada, ósea es como en verdad un pueblito apartado de la ciudad y entonces cuando llega al pueblo como que siente que no era donde ella quería ir en verdad lo odiaba ella no quería ir ahí, y su relación con el papa al principio no era muy buena como que igual ella no lo sentía mucho y ya después se fue acercando a él. Y entre eso que llego allá conoció unos amigos, conoció a Edward y a Jacob y con ellos vivió muchas aventuras.*

Teacher: Okay! Isidora, can you tell us about your book? Which was a surprise for me because I haven't read it before. What's the name of your book?

Isidora: *Em em...*

Teacher: Okay! The name is?

Isidora: the name is Hush Hush

Teacher: Okay!

Isidora: *Is about angel*

Teacher: Okay!

Isidora: *em Nora the girl she...*

Teacher: she met?

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Isidora: meet a bad angel em...

Teacher: and they fall in love? What happens? I've just read the first chapter [...] fall in love?

Isidora: They fall in love. *Ay! es que no se cómo decirlo. Ósea es que después vienen como unos sucesos raros.*

Teacher: Okay! For what I've read, because I read the first chapter they are in a... like in a classroom and the gym teacher or the couch stars teaching them sexual education and... the protagonist I don't remember her name eh, has to change sits with her best friend so her best friend moves to another place and the place of her best friend comes Prat, Pat? I don't know!

Isidora: Patch

Teacher: Patch and they have they had to do an exercise to get to know each other and she's no able to asks him any questions, he asks and she answers but she cannot know anything about this new boy. That's what I know about your book. This is the first chapter I don't know (...)

Isidora: Yes!

Teacher: Any of you, can you tell me how do you feel about reading in English? *Cómo se sienten cuando leen en Inglés?*

Isidora: Fine!

Teacher: Do you like it?

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Isidora: Yes!

Teacher: Very good! So, you two!

Alexandra: *I like read in English but is...*

Teacher: Difficult?

Alexandra: Difficult! Yes!

Teacher: Okay!

Valery: *Yo quería decir algo.*

Teacher: Tell me Valery please!

Valery: *I like reading English y me siento intelligent!*

Teacher: Are you feeling more intelligent reading in English? [...] is it different reading in English than Spanish?

Valery: Mmm, no!

Teacher: Is not easier to read in Spanish?

Valery: Ah yes, in Spanish, yes! In English no!

Teacher: In English no! You don't have the vocabulary yet! Emm okay!
When you read books for school, do you like them?

Students: No!

Teacher: No, not at all! Tell me which book you liked reading in school? [...]

Valery: *[...] Qué de qué se trataba? [...] Ya! Se supone que hay un accidente que barco o una balsa se da vuelta; era se supone una balsa que venía de Moody Estados Unidos a Cartagena de Indias, Colombia; y antes de llegar dos horas antes de llegar ese barco*

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

se vuelca y caen todos los tripulantes pero el barco después vuelve a salir a flote y llega a Colombia a la hora indicada pero se supone que todos los otros pasajeros naufragaron y los buscaron como unos días y después los dieron a todos por muertos pero en realidad si había sobrevivido uno y apareció a los diez días en otra parte de Colombia; y como que relata todo lo que él vivió en esos diez días.

Teacher: Okay! Any other book did you like Reading in Spanish? [...] which one?

Isidora: *Veraneando en Zapallar [...]*

Teacher: Ahh cool! You Sandra you don't like in Spanish?

Alexandra: No!

Teacher: Good... Em! Okay! In the workshop I have told you a few strategies or techniques to read in English. Have been working for you those and help you? *Les han ayudado las estrategias?*

Students: *Ah si!*

Teacher: Give me examples, okay!

Valery: *The workshop help me cause every time I go over my notes in English and also read better in English.*

Teacher: And also your grades have [...]?

Valery: *Si!*

Teacher: Any other thing can you tell me about your experience?

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Alexandra: Yes! The workshop is interesting, is funny and em.... the workshop help me in my *pruebas* tests, my grades is [...]

Teacher: Ah very good! Isidora can you tell us?

Isidora: the workshop help me in the [...] *ah que dije* emm in the reading and is very funny! I speak Spanish ósea English

Alexandra: *A mi me gusto porque pude aprender a ósea, ahora leo mejor en Inglés porque antes no entendía muchas cosas y con esto[...]*

Teacher: Okay guys! Remember next class you have to bring me back the books

Students: Yes!

Teacher: Because next workshop is going to be the last one and also next workshop, the last one, we will have a final test that is going to be about the book that you're reading; so, there's going to be an item of true or false and organize events, we have to organize events and you have to write about Why you like that book in particular? That's the reading, the writing part. Okay!

Students: It's beautiful! Very very beautiful!

Teacher: And girls I'm only going to take into account the first chapter because I have to read all of you and make all the test; so is extra work for me so I'm going to take into account just the first chapter and you can go with that. Okay girls! We are done, any questions?

FREE VOLUNTARY READING AND READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Students: No!

Teacher: Okay! Bye!

Students: Bye bye!

APPENDIX D

READING MATERIAL

Can Helen Escape?

It's 3 o'clock in the morning. Helen is in her room. She is putting clothes and things in a suitcase*. Her mother and father are in their bedroom. They are sleeping. Helen works very quietly because she doesn't want to wake* her father. She is going away. But this is not a holiday for Helen; she is leaving home.

Helen is only sixteen, so she is young to leave home. But she wants to go away. She isn't happy at home. The problem is her father. He doesn't understand that Helen is not a little girl now. She is a young woman and she wants to be more independent. She wants to go out in the evening with her friends. She wants to meet new people. But this isn't possible because her father thinks she is a child. He says she can't stay out after six o'clock in the evening. He tells Helen that she must stay at home and be a good girl.

Helen thinks about her mother's situation. Her mother is a nice woman but she doesn't have a strong character. Helen's father always says, 'I wear the trousers in this house!' This means that *he* makes all the decisions. His wife's opinions are not important. Helen's mother doesn't have a job. She doesn't have any friends. She doesn't have any independence.

Helen doesn't want to live like her mother. She wants something different. But with her father it is

CAN HELEN ESCAPE?



But this is not a holiday for Helen; she is leaving home.

impossible to be independent. He always wants to know where she is. He wants to know what she is doing. Helen talks to her friends at school. Their fathers are different. Helen tells them, 'I don't live in a house. I live in a prison. I can't go out and my friends can't visit me. I want to escape from this prison!'

Helen is different from her mother. She has a strong character. She is not always quiet and obedient. She tells her father that she doesn't always agree with his decisions. For example, Helen's brother, Michael, can go out in the evening. He can do what he wants.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE

Helen tells her father that this is not right. She says, 'Michael is only one year older than me, but he can go out when he wants. Why is it different for me?' Her father always answers, 'Because you are a girl.' Helen is angry when she hears that answer. She insults her father. Then he gets angry too, and he insults Helen. In these situations, Helen's mother doesn't know what to do. So she doesn't say anything.



She insults her father. Then he gets angry too, and he insults Helen.

CAN HELEN ESCAPE?
.....

Lots of girls have these problems. Sixteen is a difficult age. At sixteen a girl is not a child, but she is not a woman. There is often a conflict between a girl of this age and her father.

But Helen has another problem. Two months ago a special boy came into her life. His name is Gary. Helen liked Gary immediately. She saw that he was different from other boys. They talked and laughed a lot. Then Gary asked, 'Can I see you tomorrow?' And Helen answered, 'Yes, after school.'

Everything happened very quickly. Helen saw Gary again. Then Gary came to meet her after school every day. Helen was very happy when she was with Gary. He was special. He didn't think she was a child. With Gary she was a woman.

One day Gary said, 'Let's go out later this evening. Let's go to a pub.' But Helen answered, 'I'm sorry, but it isn't possible. My father says I must be home at six o'clock.' Gary didn't understand this. He said, 'Your father is stupid. Modern girls don't go home at six o'clock.' And Helen didn't have an answer.

Helen and Gary met regularly after school. Sometimes she came home at 6.15 or 6.30, and her father was angry. He wanted to know why she was late. Helen always invented a reason. She didn't tell her father about Gary.

One day her father was very angry. 'I saw you today,

PERMISSION TO LEAVE



Helen and Gary met regularly after school.

Helen,' he said. 'You were with Gary Farmer. I know that boy. I know his family. They are not nice people. Gary is no good. You must not see him again. Do you understand me, Helen? You must not see Gary Farmer again!'

'But why not?' Helen answered. 'Gary is a nice boy. He says nice things. He says that I am beautiful ...'

'He says that to every girl he meets. And he probably knows a lot of girls ...'

'No! That's not true! I am special. He says that I am special.'

CAN HELEN ESCAPE?

'He tells all the girls that they are special. Don't listen to him. You don't know him, Helen ...'

'Yes, I do! I know everything about him.'

'Do you? OK, has he got a job?'

'Yes ... no ... well, I don't know ... Yes, he has got a job. He always has money, so I know he has a job.'

'And what does he do exactly, Helen?'

'Well, I don't know ... He sells something, I think.'

'You think he sells something. And how old is he, Helen?'

'I don't know ... twenty-one, twenty-two ... his age isn't important.'

'It is important, Helen, because you are only sixteen. You are only a child ...'

'I am not a child!'

'You are not eighteen, so you are a child! I am your father and you must do what I tell you. And I am telling you that you must never see that boy again!'

'No! I'm going to see him tomorrow, and the next day, and the next day. I'm going to see him every day. You can't stop me. Gary says you are stupid. He is right. You are ...'

Then something terrible happened. For the first time in Helen's life, her father hit her. He hit her face with his open hand. There was silence. This was a real surprise for Helen, and she didn't know what to say. Her mother wanted to say something, but she was afraid. Her father walked out of the room.

Later Helen's mother said, 'Your father is sorry he

PERMISSION TO LEAVE



For the first time in Helen's life, her father hit her.

hit you, Helen. It was wrong. He was very angry. But he loves you, Helen.'

'No, he doesn't,' Helen answered.

'Yes, he does. He loves you very much. He's your father ...'

'Father? No, he isn't. I haven't got a father.'

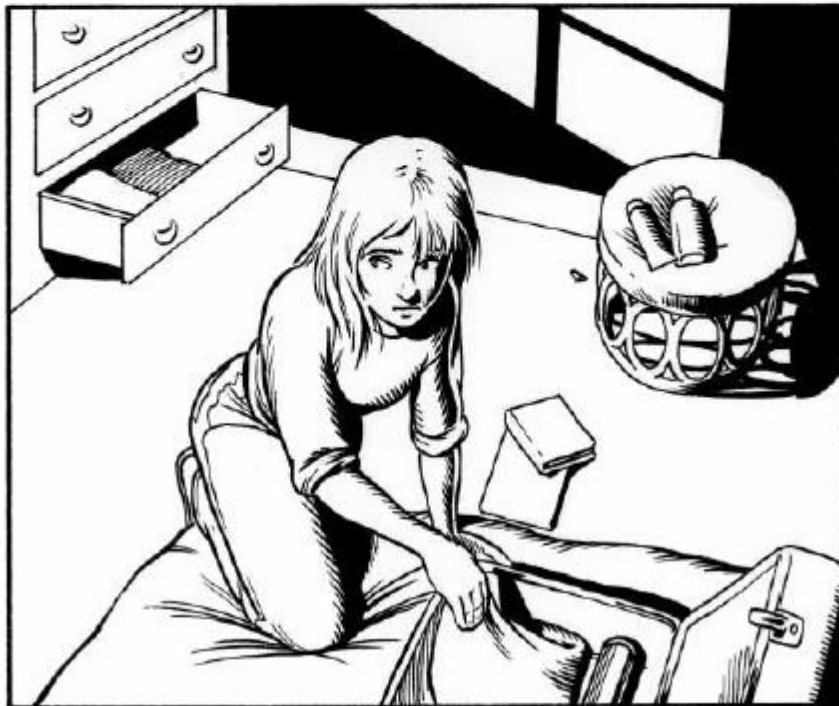
■ ■ ■

And now Helen is preparing her suitcase. She can't stay in this house. The problems with her father are more serious every day. Helen and her father can't have a normal conversation. Her father always offends her, and she always insults him. There isn't any communication.

CAN HELEN ESCAPE?
.....

Helen hears something. She stops preparing her suitcase and listens. Someone is moving in the next bedroom. Who is it? Is it her mother? Or her father? 'Oh, no,' Helen thinks. 'He mustn't open this door and see this suitcase ...' She doesn't move. She is afraid. She remembers the day her father hit her. He mustn't know that she is preparing to leave home.

Now she hears someone leave her parents' bedroom. Helen thinks it is her father. He is only two metres from Helen's door. 'Please don't open it!' Helen thinks. 'Please don't stop me now. I only need five minutes to finish my suitcase. Then I can escape. Everything is ready.'



She stops preparing her suitcase and listens.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE
.....

Gary and Helen have a plan. Helen is going to meet Gary in the street. He has a car. They are going to drive to a town 100 kilometres away. Gary has some friends in this town. These friends have a big house. Helen and Gary can stay in this house for two or three days. Gary is happy with this plan. Helen is happy too.

Her father doesn't open her bedroom door. He walks past her door and goes to the kitchen. 'I must be calm,' Helen thinks. 'He is only going to get a glass of water.' But it isn't easy to be calm. The next five minutes are very important. She can escape now and then her life can be different. She can be a woman, not a child. But first she must leave the house.

She looks at her watch. It's 3.25. She is going to meet Gary at 3.30. Why doesn't her father go back to bed? What is he doing? She can hear him. He goes from one room to another. He opens a window. Why? It's a cold night. Then he closes the window again. What is he doing? He's in the kitchen again. Then he goes to another room. 'I must be calm,' she thinks. But the minutes pass and Helen's father doesn't go back to bed. It is impossible for her to be calm.

Helen thinks about the future. They can stay with Gary's friends for two or three days. And then? How are they going to live? Gary always says, 'No problem. Money is no problem for me. Everything is going to be OK, Helen.' But Helen thinks about these things. She hasn't got a job. And what exactly is Gary's job? What are they going to do? 'I don't need a job,' Gary

CAN HELEN ESCAPE?



'I don't need a job,' Gary says. 'I can always get money.'

says. 'I can always get money.' Helen doesn't understand. What does Gary mean? 'Don't think about jobs and money,' he says. 'You are going to be with me all day and all night. Think about that.'

3.40. 'I'm ten minutes late,' she thinks. 'Poor Gary is waiting for me. What is he thinking? Maybe he thinks I'm not going to meet him.' Her father opens the window again. Ten seconds later he closes it. What is he doing?

Time is passing. 3.45. Fifteen minutes late. Helen puts the last things into her suitcase and closes it quietly. The suitcase is not very heavy. She can run with it if necessary.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE
.....

At 3.50, Helen's father goes back to his bedroom. But he doesn't want to sleep. Helen's parents are talking. She can't hear the words, but she knows that her father is angry. Her mother is talking a lot too. What can Helen do? She is afraid of her father. She doesn't know what to do. Can she leave the house now? It's difficult, but if she is very quiet maybe she can do it. But she mustn't make a sound*.

Then she thinks about another thing. It is nearly 3.55 and Gary is waiting in his car. Or is he? She is twenty-five minutes late. Maybe he got tired of waiting. 'No!' she thinks. 'I know Gary. He is waiting for me. I know he is waiting.'

4.00. Helen knows that she cannot wait any more. She must leave at once. It is now or never. She opens her door very quietly. Her parents don't hear her because they are talking a lot. She stands near their door for a moment. Now she can hear what they are saying:

'How do you know it's Gary's car?' her mother asks. 'Lots of young men have ...'

'I tell you it's Gary Farmer!' her father says. 'I know his car. And it's easy to see it from our window!'

Now Helen understands everything. Her father knows that Gary is waiting in the street. She must move quickly. Ten seconds later she is out of the house. She runs out to the street.

The sound of brakes* wakes everyone in the street. People look out of their windows to see what is

CAN HELEN ESCAPE?



'I tell you it's Gary Farmer!' her father says. 'I know his car.'

PERMISSION TO LEAVE
.....

happening. Helen's parents are the first people to look out.

The car stops a few centimetres away from Helen. The driver is angry: 'You stupid girl! Why did you run into the street without looking? You're going to ... Oh, Helen, it's you.'

'Gary! You nearly killed me!'

'Don't exaggerate. Well, now that you're here, get in the car. We're late.'

Helen doesn't move. She looks into Gary's eyes. There is something different about him. She sees something for the first time. 'But, Gary,' she says, 'you didn't want to wait for me. You decided to go home.'

'Well, I can't wait all night. But you're here now. So there's no problem.'

'I don't know ... I ...'

'Get in the car, Helen! Everything's going to be OK now. My friends say we can stay in their house for a week. Think about that, Helen. A week with me!'

'And after that week? What are we going to do then, Gary?'

'Don't think about stupid things like that, Helen. Well, are you coming or not?'

Helen doesn't know what to do. Five minutes ago everything was clear. But now she is confused.

'Helen! Wait! Don't get into that car!'

She sees her father coming out of the house.

Gary opens the car door for her. 'It's your decision, Helen. Do you want an exciting life? Or do you want

PERMISSION TO LEAVE

.....

happening. Helen's parents are the first people to look out.

The car stops a few centimetres away from Helen. The driver is angry: 'You stupid girl! Why did you run into the street without looking? You're going to ... Oh, Helen, it's you.'

'Gary! You nearly killed me!'

'Don't exaggerate. Well, now that you're here, get in the car. We're late.'

Helen doesn't move. She looks into Gary's eyes. There is something different about him. She sees something for the first time. 'But, Gary,' she says, 'you didn't want to wait for me. You decided to go home.'

'Well, I can't wait all night. But you're here now. So there's no problem.'

'I don't know ... I ...'

'Get in the car, Helen! Everything's going to be OK now. My friends say we can stay in their house for a week. Think about that, Helen. A week with me!'

'And after that week? What are we going to do then, Gary?'

'Don't think about stupid things like that, Helen. Well, are you coming or not?'

Helen doesn't know what to do. Five minutes ago everything was clear. But now she is confused.

'Helen! Wait! Don't get into that car!'

She sees her father coming out of the house.

Gary opens the car door for her. 'It's your decision, Helen. Do you want an exciting life? Or do you want

Raimundo Sánchez - Superstar*



He thinks about the actors, and the films, and the famous people, and ...

Raimundo's class is having a geography lesson. The teacher, Mrs Guillamas, is indicating things on a big map of North America. She is talking about cities and states in the USA.

Raimundo is not listening to the teacher. He doesn't like geography. He doesn't like school very much. Raimundo is thirteen. Boys of that age never like school.

RAIMUNDO SÁNCHEZ - SUPERSTAR

‘This is California,’ Mrs Guillamas says. She indicates California on the map. ‘It’s a very rich state. The biggest city is Los Angeles ...’

Raimundo isn’t listening. For him the most important thing in California is Hollywood. All the famous actors and actresses live there. People see Hollywood films in every country in the world. Raimundo thinks about Hollywood. He thinks about the actors, and the films, and the famous people, and ...

■ ■ ■

This is the most important evening in the Hollywood calendar. It is the evening of the ‘Oscar’ ceremony. There are a lot of people standing in a magnificent room. The women are wearing expensive dresses. The men are wearing formal suits. No one is wearing jeans here.



It is the evening of the ‘Oscar’ ceremony.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE



He stands up and goes to accept his 'Oscar'.

The people are talking a lot. They are impatient. They want to know the answer to an important question: who is going to get the Oscar for the best actor? Some people say Kevin Costner. Other people say Tom Hanks or Tom Cruise. They are all talking about this.

The presenter speaks into a microphone. 'Ladies and gentlemen', can I have your attention, please?' Now the room is quiet. No one is talking. Everyone is listening to the presenter. He continues. 'I have something important to tell you ...'

There is complete silence in the room. Everyone is waiting for the most important news of the evening.

'... The Oscar for the best actor goes to ... Raimundo Sánchez!'

RAIMUNDO SÁNCHEZ - SUPERSTAR

The room isn't quiet now! There is a lot of applause for Raimundo. The people start talking again. Raimundo is very happy. He stands up and goes to accept his Oscar. This is the best day of his life. He knows that his mother and father are watching him on TV. It is a big surprise: the Oscar didn't go to Tom Cruise or Kevin Costner, but to a boy from Spain.



'Raimundo Sánchez!' Mrs Guillamas is speaking to him. 'Are you listening to me, Raimundo? I asked you a question. Now what is the answer?'

But Raimundo can't answer. He didn't hear the question. He wasn't in the class. He was in Hollywood! The other boys and girls are all looking at Raimundo. Some of them are laughing. Raimundo's face goes red.



Raimundo's face goes red.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE
.....

‘Well, Raimundo?’ Mrs Guillamas continues. ‘I asked you about a very important man. I asked you to tell me his name. And I am waiting for your answer.’

In panic, Raimundo says the first name that comes into his head. ‘Oscar! His name’s Oscar.’

All the other boys and girls laugh. Mrs Guillamas laughs too. ‘Oh, Raimundo,’ she says. ‘I wanted the name of the first president of the United States, which is the name of the capital city, too. Do you know a president or a city called Oscar?’

‘Sorry, Mrs Guillamas,’ Raimundo says. He knows that he said a stupid thing, but now he can give the correct answer. ‘I wanted to say George Washington. He was the first president of the United States. And Washington DC is the capital city.’

‘That’s right, Raimundo,’ Mrs Guillamas says. ‘You are not stupid, but sometimes you forget to bring your head to school. Please concentrate!’

‘Yes, Mrs Guillamas,’ Raimundo answers.

And he listens to the teacher ... for five or six minutes. But soon he is thinking about other things. It’s a nice day and he doesn’t want to be at school. He wants to be out in the sun. It’s a good day for football. He would like to go out and play football with his friends.

Raimundo starts thinking about football. He thinks about the best teams in Europe and South America: Real Madrid, A.C. Milan, Barcelona, Boca Juniors. He thinks about the strongest national teams: Germany,

RAIMUNDO SÁNCHEZ - SUPERSTAR

Brazil, Italy, Argentina. He remembers the best matches from the last World Cup*. And he thinks about the next World Cup ...



'We're in the last minute of the game,' the football reporter says. 'It's Brazil 2 - Spain 2 in this World Cup final. What a fantastic match! This is one of the best finals in the history of the World Cup. Brazil and Spain are both playing very well. But they are tired, and it's a hot day. Now the Spanish number 10, Raimundo Sánchez, has the ball . He got two goals in the first half of the match. Can he get another goal and win* the World Cup for Spain? We're in the last seconds of the game, now. Sánchez runs at the Brazilian defence. He goes past Nadal ... and Salinas ... the ball is on his left foot ... GOAL!'*



A splendid goal! Sánchez' foot is pure dynamite!

PERMISSION TO LEAVE

A splendid goal! Sánchez' foot is pure dynamite! In the last seconds of the game, Sánchez gets a magnificent goal. Brazil can't do anything now; there isn't time. Spain is going to win the World Cup after a third goal by Raimundo Sánchez in the last minute ...'



'This is the Columbia River. It's named after Christopher Columbus,' Mrs Guillamas is saying. 'Who can remember when Columbus discovered America? Raimundo! What do you think?'

'What? Oh! Um ... in the last minute,' Raimundo answers.

Everybody laughs again. Raimundo knows that his answer is ridiculous. But why? What was the question? He didn't hear it.

Mrs Guillamas wants to help him: 'Think, Raimundo. It's an important date because he is one of the most famous men in our history. He wasn't Spanish, but he got money from Spain for ...'

'Oh, I know!' Raimundo says. 'Diego Maradona!'

His friends laugh and laugh. One of the boys tells him that the question was about Christopher Columbus. Raimundo understands why they are all laughing at him. And he is a little nervous. Maybe Mrs Guillamas is angry now.

But the teacher is not angry. She knows that Raimundo is not a bad boy. The problem is that he can't control his imagination.

RAIMUNDO SÁNCHEZ - SUPERSTAR

'You never listen, Raimundo,' she tells him. 'You sit here in class, but you are always thinking about other things. You can't concentrate on the lesson for more than five minutes. Why is that, Raimundo?' He doesn't answer. Mrs Guillamas continues. 'Well, I think I know why. And I know what you are thinking, Raimundo.'

There is silence in the room. Everyone is looking at Raimundo. Mrs Guillamas speaks again. 'Raimundo, your problem is that you are in love*!'

Everyone laughs at Raimundo. One of the girls, Inés Jiménez, smiles* at him. She is a pretty* girl, and Raimundo likes her very much. But there is a problem: when Inés looks at him, his face goes completely red. Now his face is the colour of a tomato.

After a moment, the class stops laughing and Mrs



One of the girls, Inés Jimenez, smiles at him.

.....
 PERMISSION TO LEAVE

Guillamas begins the lesson again. Raimundo looks at the map and listens to the teacher for five minutes ... six minutes ... seven ... Then he starts thinking about Inés and how she smiled at him. She has a pretty face and beautiful eyes. When she looks at Raimundo, he can't speak! He can't find any words. He likes her a lot. But does she like him? Or does she think he is a stupid boy with a red face? Raimundo wants to be her boyfriend but he is afraid to speak to her. What can he do? How can he be her boyfriend? He thinks about the possibilities. He has a lot of ideas. Then he has one idea in particular ...



The criminal is driving at 160 kms per hour in his black Mercedes. There is another person in the car. It's Inés. She is the criminal's prisoner. She is thinking, "This man is going to kill me! Who can help me?"*

There's a white Porsche behind the Mercedes. It's coming nearer and nearer. It passes the Mercedes, then it stops in the middle of the road. Now the Mercedes must stop too. Raimundo gets out of the Porsche and looks at the other car.

'Stay where you are!' the criminal says to Raimundo. 'I can kill this girl. Look!' He has a pistol in his hand. Inés is afraid. Her face is white and she is crying.

'But I haven't got a pistol,' Raimundo says. 'Look. There is nothing in my hand.'

'What do you want?' the criminal asks.

'Listen,' Raimundo begins. 'I know that you robbed' a

RAIMUNDO SÁNCHEZ - SUPERSTAR



'Stay where you are!' the criminal says to Raimundo.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE

bank this morning. The money is in your car. But that is not important to me; you can have the money. I don't want it. I only want Inés. Give me Inés, then you can go.'

'I need the girl,' the criminal says. 'When the police see her, they can't stop me because they know I can kill her.'

'The police don't know where you are. They don't know which road you are taking. Only I know, and I don't want to stop you. So you don't need Inés now.'

'Do you think I'm stupid?' the criminal asks. 'I know your plan: I'm going to give you the girl and drive away, and you are going to telephone the police immediately from your car.'

'No,' Raimundo says. 'That isn't true. You can take my car telephone. And you can put us in the Porsche and lock* the door.'

The criminal thinks about this idea for a moment. It is true that he doesn't need Inés now. He is 30 kilometres from the city and the police don't know where he is going.

'OK. I accept your plan.' Then he speaks to Inés. 'Go to the Porsche! And walk slowly!'

For one second the criminal is looking only at Inés and not at Raimundo. But one second is sufficient for a kung fu expert. Raimundo is fast and strong; he hits the man five or six times. Soon the criminal is on the ground and Raimundo has his pistol.

Inés runs to Raimundo. 'Oh, Raimundo!' she says. 'You are my hero! Thank you. Thank you. That horrible man ... I was afraid of him. But my hero, Raimundo, came to help me. I love you. Yes, I love you ...'

RAIMUNDO SÁNCHEZ - SUPERSTAR



'Oh, Raimundo!' she says. 'You are my hero!'

■ ■ ■

At that moment, Mrs Guillamas speaks to Raimundo.

'I love you, too,' he answers.

'Ssh, don't tell everyone, Raimundo,' Mrs Guillamas says. 'My husband must not know about this.'

The other boys and girls start laughing. Mrs Guillamas asks them to be quiet, but it is impossible. They can't stop laughing. Raimundo always says extraordinary things during lessons. But to say 'I love you,' to Mrs Guillamas! They laugh and laugh. And poor Raimundo wants to be a thousand kilometres from this classroom. He wants to be far away, where no one can see his red face.

Everyone is looking at him. Inés is looking at him. She is smiling. But Raimundo doesn't see this because

PERMISSION TO LEAVE

he is afraid to look at her.

Then Mrs Guillamas says to him, ‘Raimundo, sometimes I think you go to another world. You leave the planet Earth and you go to another world. What do you see there, Raimundo?’

He does not answer. Mrs Guillamas speaks again, ‘Now I’m going to continue the lesson. Look. This is the Mississippi River. It goes from ...’

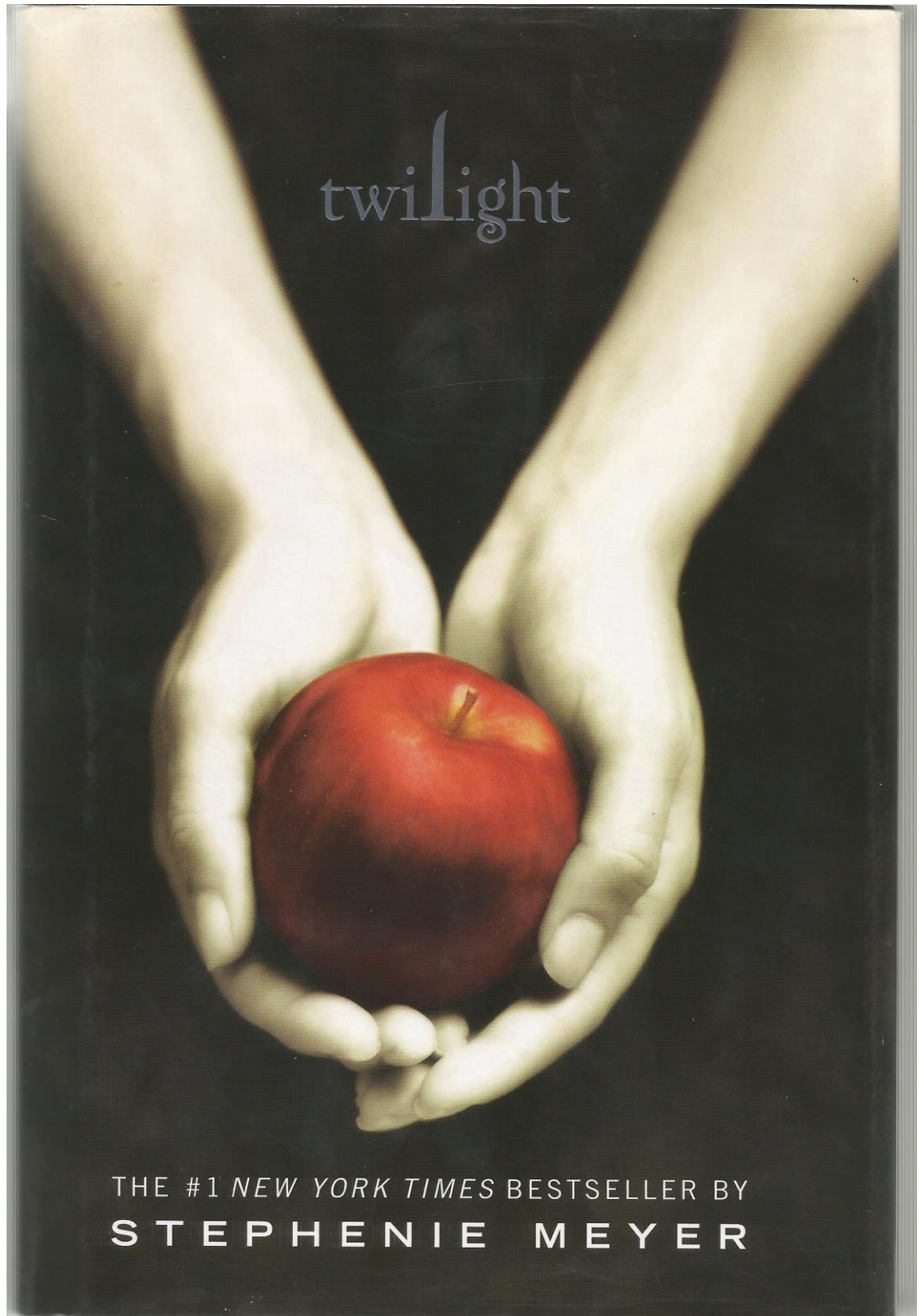
■ ■ ■

Raimundo is listening to the radio. He is listening to the news. ‘This is a memorable and historic day. It is the year 2015 and we are on the first space mission to the planet Venus. The commander is the famous astronaut, Captain Raimundo Sánchez ...’

RAIMUNDO SÁNCHEZ - SUPERSTAR



The commander is the famous astronaut, Captain Raimundo Sánchez.



PREFACE

I'D NEVER GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO HOW I WOULD DIE—though I'd had reason enough in the last few months—but even if I had, I would not have imagined it like this.

I stared without breathing across the long room, into the dark eyes of the hunter, and he looked pleasantly back at me.

Surely it was a good way to die, in the place of someone else, someone I loved. Noble, even. That ought to count for something.

I knew that if I'd never gone to Forks, I wouldn't be facing death now. But, terrified as I was, I couldn't bring myself to regret the decision. When life offers you a dream so far beyond any of your expectations, it's not reasonable to grieve when it comes to an end.

The hunter smiled in a friendly way as he sauntered forward to kill me.

1. 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.”

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 homecoming gift.” Charlie peeked sideways at me with a hopeful expression.

Wow. Free.

“You didn’t need to do that, Dad. I was going to buy myself a car.”

“I don’t mind. I want you to be happy here.” He was looking ahead at the road when he said this. Charlie wasn’t comfortable with expressing his emotions out loud. I inherited that from him. So I was looking straight ahead as I responded.

“That’s really nice, Dad. Thanks. I really appreciate it.” No need to add that my being happy in Forks is an impossibility. He didn’t need to suffer along with me. And I never looked a free truck in the mouth—or engine.

“Well, now, you’re welcome,” he mumbled, embarrassed by my thanks.

We exchanged a few more comments on the weather, which was wet, and that was pretty much it for conversation. We stared out the windows in silence.

It was beautiful, of course; I couldn't deny that. Everything was green: the trees, their trunks covered with moss, their branches hanging with a canopy of it, the ground covered with ferns. Even the air filtered down greenly through the leaves.

It was too green—an alien planet.

Eventually we made it to Charlie's. He still lived in the small, two-bedroom house that he'd bought with my mother in the early days of their marriage. Those were the only kind of days their marriage had—the early ones. There, parked on the street in front of the house that never changed, was my new—well, new to me—truck. It was a faded red color, with big, rounded fenders and a bulbous cab. To my intense surprise, I loved it. I didn't know if it would run, but I could see myself in it. Plus, it was one of those solid iron affairs that never gets damaged—the kind you see at the scene of an accident, paint

unscratched, surrounded by the pieces of the foreign car it had destroyed.

“Wow, Dad, I love it! Thanks!” Now my horrific day tomorrow would be just that much less dreadful. I wouldn’t be faced with the choice of either walking two miles in the rain to school or accepting a ride in the Chief’s cruiser.

“I’m glad you like it,” Charlie said gruffly, embarrassed again.

It took only one trip to get all my stuff upstairs. I got the west bedroom that faced out over the front yard. The room was familiar; it had belonged to me since I was born. The wooden floor, the light blue walls, the peaked ceiling, the yellowed lace curtains around the window—these were all a part of my childhood. The only changes Charlie had ever made were switching the crib for a bed and adding a desk as I grew. The desk now held a second-hand computer, with the phone line for the modem stapled along the floor to the nearest phone jack. This was a stipulation from my mother, so that we could stay in touch easily.

The rocking chair from my baby days was still in the corner.

There was only one small bathroom at the top of the stairs, which I would have to share with Charlie. I was trying not to dwell too much on that fact.

One of the best things about Charlie is he doesn't hover. He left me alone to unpack and get settled, a feat that would have been altogether impossible for my mother. It was nice to be alone, not to have to smile and look pleased; a relief to stare dejectedly out the window at the sheeting rain and let just a few tears escape. I wasn't in the mood to go on a real crying jag. I would save that for bedtime, when I would have to think about the coming morning.

Forks High School had a frightening total of only three hundred and fifty-seven—now fifty-eight—students; there were more than seven hundred people in my junior class alone back home. All of the kids here had grown up together—their grandparents had been toddlers together. I would be the new girl from the big city, a curiosity, a freak.

Maybe, if I looked like a girl from Phoenix should, I could work this to my advantage. But physically, I'd never fit in anywhere. I *should* be tan, sporty, blonde—a volleyball player, or a cheerleader, perhaps—all the things that go with living in the valley of the sun.

Instead, I was ivory-skinned, without even the excuse of blue eyes or red hair, despite the constant sunshine. I had always been slender, but soft somehow, obviously not an athlete; I didn't have the necessary hand-eye coordination to play sports without humiliating myself—and harming both myself and anyone else who stood too close.

When I finished putting my clothes in the old pine dresser, I took my bag of bathroom necessities and went to the communal bathroom to clean myself up after the day of travel. I looked at my face in the mirror as I brushed through my tangled, damp hair. Maybe it was the light, but already I looked sallow, unhealthy. My skin could be pretty—it was very clear, almost translucent-looking—but it all depended on color. I had no color here.

Facing my pallid reflection in the mirror, I was forced to admit that I was lying to myself. It wasn't just physically that I'd never fit in. And if I couldn't find a niche in a school with three thousand people, what were my chances here?

I didn't relate well to people my age. Maybe the truth was that I didn't relate well to people, period. Even my mother, who I was closer to than anyone else on the planet, was never in harmony with me, never on exactly the same page. Sometimes I wondered if I was seeing the same things through my eyes that the rest of the world was seeing through theirs. Maybe there was a glitch in my brain.

But the cause didn't matter. All that mattered was the effect. And tomorrow would be just the beginning.

I didn't sleep well that night, even after I was done crying. The constant *whooshing* of the rain and wind across the roof wouldn't fade into the background. I pulled the faded old quilt over my head, and later added the pillow, too. But I couldn't fall asleep until

after midnight, when the rain finally settled into a quieter drizzle.

Thick fog was all I could see out my window in the morning, and I could feel the claustrophobia creeping up on me. You could never see the sky here; it was like a cage.

Breakfast with Charlie was a quiet event. He wished me good luck at school. I thanked him, knowing his hope was wasted. Good luck tended to avoid me. Charlie left first, off to the police station that was his wife and family. After he left, I sat at the old square oak table in one of the three unmatching chairs and examined his small kitchen, with its dark paneled walls, bright yellow cabinets, and white linoleum floor. Nothing was changed. My mother had painted the cabinets eighteen years ago in an attempt to bring some sunshine into the house. Over the small fireplace in the adjoining handkerchief-sized family room was a row of pictures. First, a wedding picture of Charlie and my mom in Las Vegas, then one of the three of us in the hospital after I was born, taken by a helpful nurse, followed by the procession of my school

pictures up to last year's. Those were embarrassing to look at—I would have to see what I could do to get Charlie to put them somewhere else, at least while I was living here.

It was impossible, being in this house, not to realize that Charlie had never gotten over my mom. It made me uncomfortable.

I didn't want to be too early to school, but I couldn't stay in the house anymore. I donned my jacket—which had the feel of a biohazard suit—and headed out into the rain.

It was just drizzling still, not enough to soak me through immediately, as I reached for the house key that was always hidden under the eaves by the door, and locked up. The sloshing of my new waterproof boots was unnerving. I missed the normal crunch of gravel as I walked. I couldn't pause and admire my truck again as I wanted; I was in a hurry to get out of the misty wet that swirled around my head and clung to my hair under my hood.

Inside the truck, it was nice and dry. Either Billy or Charlie had obviously cleaned it up, but the tan

upholstered seats still smelled faintly of tobacco, gasoline, and peppermint. The engine started quickly, to my relief, but loudly, roaring to life and then idling at top volume. Well, a truck this old was bound to have a flaw. The antique radio worked, a plus that I hadn't expected.

Finding the school wasn't difficult, though I'd never been there before. The school was, like most other things, just off the highway. 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, built with maroon-colored bricks. There were so many trees and shrubs I couldn't see its size at first. Where was the feel of the institution? I wondered nostalgically. Where were the chain-link fences, the metal detectors?

I parked in front of the first building, which had a small sign over the door reading FRONT OFFICE. No one else was parked there, so I was sure it was off limits, but I decided I would get directions inside instead of circling around in the rain like an idiot. I

stepped unwillingly out of the toasty truck cab and walked down a little stone path lined with dark hedges. I took a deep breath before opening the door.

Inside, it was brightly lit, and warmer than I'd hoped. The office was small; a little waiting area with padded folding chairs, orange-flecked commercial carpet, notices and awards cluttering the walls, a big clock ticking loudly. Plants grew everywhere in large plastic pots, as if there wasn't enough greenery outside. The room was cut in half by a long counter, cluttered with wire baskets full of papers and brightly colored flyers taped to its front. There were three desks behind the counter, one of which was manned by a large, red-haired woman wearing glasses. She was wearing a purple T-shirt, which immediately made me feel overdressed.

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 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, like Charlie, that I would like it here in Forks. I smiled back as convincingly as I could.

When I went back out to my truck, other students were starting to arrive. I drove around the school, following the line of traffic. I was glad to see that most of the cars were older like mine, nothing flashy. At home I’d lived in one of the few lower-income neighborhoods that were included in the Paradise Valley District. It was a common thing to see a new Mercedes or Porsche in the student lot. The nicest car here was a shiny Volvo, and it stood out. Still, I cut the engine as soon as I was in a spot, so that the thunderous volume wouldn’t draw attention to me.

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 with relief.

Once I got around the cafeteria, building three was easy to spot. A large black "3" was painted on a white square on the east corner. I felt my breathing gradually creeping toward hyperventilation as I approached the door. I tried holding my breath as I followed two unisex raincoats through the door.

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. At least my skin wouldn't be a standout here.

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. I kept my eyes down on the reading list the teacher had given me. It was fairly basic: Brontë, Shakespeare, Chaucer, Faulkner. I'd already read everything. That was comforting . . . and boring. I wondered if my mom would send me my folder of old essays, or if she would think that was cheating. I went through different arguments with her in my head while the teacher droned on.

When the bell rang, a nasal buzzing sound, a gangly boy with skin problems and hair black as an oil slick leaned across the aisle to talk to me.

“You’re Isabella Swan, aren’t you?” He looked like the overly helpful, chess club type.

“Bella,” I corrected. Everyone within a three-seat radius turned to look at me.

“Where’s your next class?” he asked.

I had to check in my bag. “Um, Government, with Jefferson, in building six.”

There was nowhere to look without meeting curious eyes.

“I’m headed toward building four, I could show you the way . . .” Definitely over-helpful. “I’m Eric,” he added.

I smiled tentatively. “Thanks.”

We got our jackets and headed out into the rain, which had picked up. I could have sworn several people behind us were walking close enough to eavesdrop. I hoped I wasn’t getting paranoid.

“So, this is a lot different than Phoenix, huh?” he asked.

“Very.”

“It doesn’t rain much there, does it?”

“Three or four times a year.”

“Wow, what must that be like?” he wondered.

“Sunny,” I told him.

“You don’t look very tan.”

“My mother is part albino.”

He studied my face apprehensively, and I sighed. It looked like clouds and a sense of humor didn’t mix. A few months of this and I’d forget how to use sarcasm.

We walked back around the cafeteria, to the south buildings by the gym. Eric walked me right to the door, though it was clearly marked.

“Well, good luck,” he said as I touched the handle. “Maybe we’ll have some other classes together.” He sounded hopeful.

I smiled at him vaguely and went inside.

The rest of the morning passed in about the same fashion. My Trigonometry teacher, Mr. Varner, who I would have hated anyway just because of the subject he taught, was the only one who made me stand in front of the class and introduce myself. I stammered, blushed, and tripped over my own boots on the way to my seat.

After two classes, I started to recognize several of the faces in each class. There was always someone braver than the others who would introduce themselves and ask me questions about how I was liking Forks. I tried to be diplomatic, but mostly I just lied a lot. At least I never needed the map.

One girl sat next to me in both Trig and Spanish, and she walked with me to the cafeteria for lunch. She was tiny, several inches shorter than my five feet four inches, but her wildly curly dark hair made up a lot of the difference between our heights. I couldn't remember her name, so I smiled and nodded as she prattled about teachers and classes. I didn't try to keep up.

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 bravery in speaking to me. The boy from English, Eric, waved 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 tray of untouched food in front of them. They weren't gawking 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. Of the three boys, one was big—muscled like a serious weight lifter, with dark curly hair. Another was taller, leaner, but still muscular, and honey blond. The last was lanky, less bulky, 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.

The girls were opposites. The tall one was statuesque. She had a beautiful figure, the kind you

saw on the cover of the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue, the kind that made every girl around her take a hit on her self-esteem just by being in the same room. Her hair was golden, gently waving to the middle of her back. The short girl was pixielike, thin in the extreme, with small features. Her hair was a deep black, cropped short and pointing in every direction.

And yet, they were all exactly alike. Every one of them was chalky pale, the palest of all the students living in this sunless town. Paler than me, the albino. They all had very dark eyes despite the range in hair tones. They also had dark shadows under those eyes—purplish, bruiselike shadows. As if they were all suffering from a sleepless night, or almost done recovering from a broken nose. Though their noses, all their features, were straight, perfect, angular.

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 airbrushed 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 blonde 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, unbitten apple—and walked away with a quick, graceful lope that belonged on a runway. I watched, amazed at her lithe dancer’s step, till she dumped her tray and glided 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.

As she looked up to see who I meant—though already knowing, probably, from my tone—suddenly he looked at her, the thinner one, the boyish one, the youngest, perhaps. He looked at my neighbor for just a fraction of a second, and then his dark eyes flickered to mine.

He looked away quickly, more quickly than I could, though in a flush of embarrassment I dropped my eyes at once. In that brief flash of a glance, his face held nothing of interest—it was as if she had called his name, and he'd looked up in involuntary response, already having decided not to answer.

My neighbor giggled in embarrassment, looking at the table like I did.

“That’s Edward and Emmett Cullen, and Rosalie and Jasper Hale. The one who left was Alice Cullen; they all live together with Dr. Cullen and his wife.” She said this under her breath.

I glanced sideways at the beautiful boy, who was looking at his tray now, picking a bagel to pieces with long, pale fingers. His mouth was moving very quickly, his perfect lips barely opening. The other three still looked away, and yet I felt he was speaking quietly to them.

Strange, unpopular names, I thought. The kinds of names grandparents had. But maybe that was in vogue here—small town names? I finally remembered that my neighbor was called Jessica, a perfectly

common name. There were two girls named Jessica in my History class back home.

“They are . . . very nice-looking.” I struggled with the conspicuous understatement.

“Yes!” Jessica agreed with another giggle.

“They’re all *together* though—Emmett and Rosalie, and Jasper and Alice, I mean. And they *live* together.” Her voice held all the shock and condemnation of the small town, I thought critically. But, if I was being honest, I had to admit that even in Phoenix, it would cause gossip.

“Which ones are the Cullens?” I asked. “They don’t look related . . .”

“Oh, they’re not. Dr. Cullen is really young, in his twenties or early thirties. They’re all adopted. The Hales *are* brother and sister, twins—the blonds—and they’re foster children.”

“They look a little old for foster children.”

“They are now, Jasper and Rosalie are both eighteen, but they’ve been with Mrs. Cullen since they were eight. She’s their aunt or something like that.”

“That’s really kind of nice—for them to take care of all those kids like that, when they’re so young and everything.”

“I guess so,” Jessica admitted reluctantly, and I got the impression that she didn’t like the doctor and his wife for some reason. With the glances she was throwing at their adopted children, I would presume the reason was jealousy. “I think that Mrs. Cullen can’t have any kids, though,” she added, as if that lessened their kindness.

Throughout all this conversation, my eyes flickered again and again to the table where the strange family sat. They continued to look at the walls and not eat.

“Have they always lived in Forks?” I asked. Surely I would have noticed them on one of my summers here.

“No,” she said in a voice that implied it should be obvious, even to a new arrival like me. “They just moved down two years ago from somewhere in Alaska.”

I felt a surge of pity, and relief. Pity because, as beautiful as they were, they were outsiders, clearly not accepted. Relief that I wasn't the only newcomer here, and certainly not the most interesting by any standard.

As I examined them, the youngest, one of the Cullens, looked up and met my gaze, this time with evident curiosity in his expression. As I looked swiftly away, it seemed to me that his glance held some kind of unmet expectation.

"Which one is the boy with the reddish brown hair?" I asked. I peeked at him from the corner of my eye, and he was still staring at me, but not gawking like the other students had today—he had a slightly frustrated expression. I looked down again.

"That's Edward. He's gorgeous, of course, but don't waste your time. He doesn't date. Apparently none of the girls here are good-looking enough for him." She sniffed, a clear case of sour grapes. I wondered when he'd turned her down.

I bit my lip to hide my smile. Then I glanced at him again. His face was turned away, but I thought his cheek appeared lifted, as if he were smiling, too.

After a few more minutes, the four of them left the table together. They all were noticeably graceful—even the big, brawny one. It was unsettling to watch. The one named Edward didn't look at me again.

I sat at the table with Jessica and her friends longer than I would have if I'd been sitting alone. I was anxious not to be late for class on my first day. One of my new acquaintances, who considerately reminded me that her name was Angela, had Biology II with me the next hour. We walked to class together in silence. She was shy, too.

When we entered the classroom, Angela went to sit at a blacktopped lab table exactly like the ones I was used to. She already had a neighbor. In fact, all the tables were filled but one. Next to the center aisle, I recognized Edward Cullen by his unusual hair, sitting next to that single open seat.

As I walked down the aisle to introduce myself to the teacher and get my slip signed, I was watching him surreptitiously. Just as I passed, he suddenly went rigid in his seat. He stared at me again, meeting my eyes with the strangest expression on his face—it was hostile, furious. I looked away quickly, shocked, going red again. I stumbled over a book in the walkway and had to catch myself on the edge of a table. The girl sitting there giggled.

I'd noticed that his eyes were black—coal black.

Mr. Banner signed my slip and handed me a book with no nonsense about introductions. I could tell we were going to get along. Of course, he had no choice but to send me to the one open seat in the middle of the room. I kept my eyes down as I went to sit by *him*, bewildered by the antagonistic stare he'd given me.

I didn't look up as I set my book on the table and took my seat, but I saw his posture change from the corner of my eye. He was leaning away from me, sitting on the extreme edge of his chair and averting his face like he smelled something bad.

Inconspicuously, I sniffed my hair. It smelled like strawberries, the scent of my favorite shampoo. It seemed an innocent enough odor. I let my hair fall over my right shoulder, making a dark curtain between us, and tried to pay attention to the teacher.

Unfortunately the lecture was on cellular anatomy, something I'd already studied. I took notes carefully anyway, always looking down.

I couldn't stop myself from peeking occasionally through the screen of my hair at the strange boy next to me. During the whole class, he never relaxed his stiff position on the edge of his chair, sitting as far from me as possible. I could see his hand on his left leg was clenched into a fist, tendons standing out under his pale skin. This, too, he never relaxed. He had the long sleeves of his white shirt pushed up to his elbows, and his forearm was surprisingly hard and muscular beneath his light skin. He wasn't nearly as slight as he'd looked next to his burly brother.

The class seemed to drag on longer than the others. Was it because the day was finally coming to a close, or because I was waiting for his tight fist to

loosen? It never did; he continued to sit so still it looked like he wasn't breathing. What was wrong with him? Was this his normal behavior? I questioned my judgment on Jessica's bitterness at lunch today. Maybe she was not as resentful as I'd thought.

It couldn't have anything to do with me. He didn't know me from Eve.

I peeked up at him one more time, and regretted it. He was glaring down at me again, his black eyes full of revulsion. As I flinched away from him, shrinking against my chair, the phrase *if looks could kill* suddenly ran through my mind.

At that moment, the bell rang loudly, making me jump, and Edward Cullen was out of his seat. Fluidly he rose—he was much taller than I'd thought—his back to me, and he was out the door before anyone else was out of their seat.

I sat frozen in my seat, staring blankly after him. He was so mean. It wasn't fair. I began gathering up my things slowly, trying to block the anger that filled me, for fear my eyes would tear up. For some reason,

my temper was hardwired to my tear ducts. I usually cried when I was angry, a humiliating tendency.

“Aren’t you Isabella Swan?” a male voice asked.

I looked up to see a cute, baby-faced boy, his pale blond hair carefully gelled into orderly spikes, smiling at me in a friendly way. He obviously didn’t think I smelled bad.

“Bella,” I corrected him, with a smile.

“I’m Mike.”

“Hi, Mike.”

“Do you need any help finding your next class?”

“I’m headed to the gym, actually. I think I can find it.”

“That’s my next class, too.” He seemed thrilled, though it wasn’t that big of a coincidence in a school this small.

We walked to class together; he was a chatterer—he supplied most of the conversation, which made it easy for me. He’d lived in California till he was ten, so he knew how I felt about the sun. It turned out he was in my English class also. He was the nicest person I’d met today.

But as we were entering the gym, he asked, “So, did you stab Edward Cullen with a pencil or what? I’ve never seen him act like that.”

I cringed. So I wasn’t the only one who had noticed. And, apparently, that *wasn’t* Edward Cullen’s usual behavior. I decided to play dumb.

“Was that the boy I sat next to in Biology?” I asked artlessly.

“Yes,” he said. “He looked like he was in pain or something.”

“I don’t know,” I responded. “I never spoke to him.”

“He’s a weird guy.” Mike lingered by me instead of heading to the dressing room. “If I were lucky enough to sit by you, I would have talked to you.”

I smiled at him before walking through the girls’ locker room door. He was friendly and clearly admiring. But it wasn’t enough to ease my irritation.

The Gym teacher, Coach Clapp, found me a uniform but didn’t make me dress down for today’s class. At home, only two years of P.E. were required.

Here, P.E. was mandatory all four years. Forks was literally my personal hell on Earth.

I watched four volleyball games running simultaneously. Remembering how many injuries I had sustained—and inflicted—playing volleyball, I felt faintly nauseated.

The final bell rang at last. I walked slowly to the office to return my paperwork. The rain had drifted away, but the wind was strong, and colder. I wrapped my arms around myself.

When I walked into the warm office, I almost turned around and walked back out.

Edward Cullen stood at the desk in front of me. I recognized again that tousled bronze hair. He didn't appear to notice the sound of my entrance. I stood pressed against the back wall, waiting for the receptionist to be free.

He was arguing with her in a low, attractive voice. I quickly picked up the gist of the argument. He was trying to trade from sixth-hour Biology to another time—any other time.

I just couldn't believe that this was about me. It had to be something else, something that happened before I entered the Biology room. The look on his face must have been about another aggravation entirely. It was impossible that this stranger could take such a sudden, intense dislike to me.

The door opened again, and the cold wind suddenly gusted through the room, rustling the papers on the desk, swirling my hair around my face. The girl who came in merely stepped to the desk, placed a note in the wire basket, and walked out again. But Edward Cullen's back stiffened, and he turned slowly to glare at me—his face was absurdly handsome—with piercing, hate-filled eyes. For an instant, I felt a thrill of genuine fear, raising the hair on my arms. The look only lasted a second, but it chilled me more than the freezing wind. He turned back to the receptionist.

“Never mind, then,” he said hastily in a voice like velvet. “I can see that it's impossible. Thank you so much for your help.” And he turned on his heel

without another look at me, and disappeared out the door.

I went meekly to the desk, my face white for once instead of red, and handed her the signed slip.

“How did your first day go, dear?” the receptionist asked maternally.

“Fine,” I lied, my voice weak. She didn’t look convinced.

When I got to the truck, it was almost the last car in the lot. It seemed like a haven, already the closest thing to home I had in this damp green hole. I sat inside for a while, just staring out the windshield blankly. But soon I was cold enough to need the heater, so I turned the key and the engine roared to life. I headed back to Charlie’s house, fighting tears the whole way there.

