

Ruth stops me just before I enter the library.

Today she's decided to wear a black wool sweater with faded blue jeans. I meet her gaze. Her eyes are big, slightly nervous. But she doesn't look away.

"So," Ruth sputters, "I was thinking, if you want to go inside together?"

Together. I wonder if she knows that I spend all my lunches inside here behind the YA fiction bookshelves. It was either that or sitting on the floor of the hallways in B Hall.

While contemplating my response, someone calls out to Ruth. It's Drew.

"Hey Ruth!" Drew notices me. He takes a step backwards and glances between the two of us. Drew gives a soft 'Oh' and starts to walk away. "Actually, it's not too important. Don't screw it up, Jackson."

I'm a little lost. Is there something important happening right now?

Ruth and I watch Drew enter the hallway opposite the entrance of the library and disappear in the crowd.

Let's get this over with.

"Come on, let's go," I say. I grab the handle of the door and go first. I have my back towards her as I lightly push on the door enough for her to walk through before it shuts.

The warmth is the first thing I feel. It colors my cheeks slightly pink upon coming from the cold world outside. Here, it's quiet. Well, not completely, but almost.

"What are you looking for in the library?" I ask.

Ruth searches her thoughts for a moment. "Just some research."

A vague answer. Am I supposed to ask what kind of research? Anthropology? Feminism? Philosophy? In the end, I just leave it at that.

We walk on the grey carpet floor, just strolling between the bookshelves. I stop at my usual spot. The farthest corner from the entrance and the librarian, so she can't see me sneak food out of my backpack while I'm reading. Or maybe she does notice and lets me do it anyway.

I put both hands in my pockets and stretch.

"What are you reading right now?" Ruth asks.

How original. It's like no one in the history of mankind has ever talked about books at the library. I was late getting here, so I think lunch is almost over at this point.

Honestly? I think I'm a little tired of talking to people. What I really want is some peace and quiet. And to get away from Ruth right now. I think up the most unattractive reply.

"I'm actually reading a bit of Twilight right now. Team Jacob, by the way. Have you read any of it?"

"No, I haven't. Sounds interesting," she replies.

Exactly.

"Oh cool. I think if you want to research, you can go talk to the librarian. She's super nice and will help you out." I point towards the front desk.

Ruth doesn't say anything. Then she walks away and talks to the librarian.

The bell rings just in time. The students inside slowly drain out of the exit, including Ruth. She doesn't glance back at me as I watch her figure disappear.

That was the only lunch I ever spent with someone else at the school library.