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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Incorporating and considering fans: fan culture in event film adaptations

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Appendix C

The Blog

Friday, May 09, 2008

[A Few Notes](#)



Wow. The responses I've been getting are incredible. Do you know that this blog started with just my parents and a few friends/family reading it? Then my department obviously started reading it as it's for my PhD work, but even then... maybe 10 people a week looked at it. Now it's 10 people a minute and your comments are flooring me. They're so appreciative, thoughtful and well-formed. I've always been the groupie that obsessed and poured over every detail emerging about my current fixation of the day/week/year/decade, and I'm well chuffed (British slang for really proud) that I am getting a few people interested in some of the things I've been thinking about and doing. So thanks!

Now to respond to a few of the things mentioned...

1) Debbie said: "So many people have commented on other sites that after they saw the teaser trailer that they hoped the movie would be just like the book. I'd love to tell them to come read your blog. They then would understand more about the differences between the book & the movie." - please tell them to read my blog! I'd selfishly love you to spread the word! I think you're right though; this is a good forum for me to work through my thoughts as a film student, share realizations and ideas... and I'm grateful that other people are benefiting as well! I'm so glad you guys are seeing some of what I'm seeing about the adaptation process. Like I said before, I have always balked at anything different from the book; it felt like a sacrilege, and the phrase, "Oh the book is always better..." rolled off of my tongue so easily; but now, I'm simply coming to realize that its just a different way to tell a story... that they can never be the same. They can be equally as exciting and enjoyable, but in very different ways. One might seem better because it has a more effective impact- I'll always like reading better because I get to create the universe; I become godlike and picture everything perfectly....perfect because it's my imagination and who's to say it's wrong? But that doesn't mean that I don't obsess over films for showing me that universe and letting me observe and live in it for a time, and films can give me the landscape to let my mind continue the story (hello fan fiction? sequels? artwork inspired by films? the list goes on...) I'll continue to hash this topic out for the next, oh, three years! But we all have to start the thinking process somewhere.

2) I'm sorry guys, as of right now I have no idea how you can get to work on a film. I can't hook you

up with agents, and I don't know how you can get a job on the *Twilight* set. I'm still trying to figure that out myself!

3) Fireandice- I did get a chance to talk to Wyck Godfrey (*Twilight* producer) about *Eragon*, and will be posting about that sometime in the near future :)

4) kevinandnatalimckee- I'm sorry about the webshots troubles! I'm not really a huge fan of that site either, so I may look into other ones.

5) Shauna- obsessive tendencies are what got me here! Granted I went through years of indecision and uncertainty, but it's working for me now. I really think all of my undergrad work, and my MA work was just to get me to this point... and I never went into it with this goal in mind, it's just rolling out this way. I'm seizing whatever opportunities come my way, and hoping to gain some focus along with my crazy experiences to take into something resembling a career... until then, yes, the nomad life works well for me :)

6) Sarah b said, "why were you unable to talk to Rob about the UK...did it just not come up or did you think it made you one of those "crazy people?"

-I didn't bring up the UK stuff because it just seemed a little awkward at the time; I wish Rob and I had met properly from the start and gotten that out of the way, but I wasn't about to do anything to 'rock the boat' so to speak. With a producer and a creative executive from Summit sitting right there chatting with us it would have been weird to interrupt the conversation and be like, "Hey, I'm Maggie, I live in the UK too! Aren't we cool?!" yeah, that definitely would have entered the realm of awkward! So I'll just remain pleased with the pleasant experience that I had.

7) I have a question to ponder; I'm pondering it myself and am curious of others' thoughts. When *HP: Goblet of Fire* came out, I read everything I could get my hands on, watched all of the teaser clips and everything else. While I enjoyed the film, I thought it took some of the magic out of the experience to see so much information before the actual film. So for *HP: Order of the Phoenix*, I didn't watch anything except the trailer before I saw it and I had a marvellous time. I don't know if one was better than the other, but I do think that they were very different experiences.

I think I'm beginning to enter the realm of 'I'll never be able to enjoy a movie just for the movie's sake' because I'm now dissecting it: thinking about the shots, the production, the lighting, the catering, where video village is, who is standing around the propane heaters, the shrubbery masters... but I was thinking about all of the press and information that has been released regarding *Twilight*, and I wondered what it does to the audience's expectations of the film? All of these on set pictures, interviews, clips, mtv *Twilight* Tuesdays... and when you think about *HP: Half Blood Prince* which is also filming now and very, VERY few things have been released (a few photos, scant interviews, and the one mention about ONE scene being added to the story caused an uproar in the fan community), I wonder if I'll experience *Twilight* differently than *Harry Potter*?

I think it will be interesting to see both of these films, as I'm studying both of these films, and see how the different approaches in film making and marketing affect the reception of the actual

movie...

...more than likely I'll just be swooning for both of them and still love both of them obsessively, and I'll continue pouring over every *Twilight* item released! :)

More soon- the thoughts are reeling, so while they are I shall write them down! I may not have totally *Twilight* themed stuff for all of my posts, but *Twilight* will probably be my frame of reference for most things for awhile! I'll start working in my other works as well though, and see what ideas flow.

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Posted by ScullingOnSquam at [Friday, May 09, 2008](#) [8 comments](#)  [Links to this post](#)

Wednesday, May 07, 2008



[Twilight Set, Day Three: Vernonia OR, Forks scenes](#)

Thanks for the patience guys, not to mention the cheers! Here's the set report for day three! I didn't get back from filming in St. Helen's until about 2am, so needless to say, I slept in the following morning. I knew I was going to be up all night for the final day/night of shooting, so I tried to sleep as long as I could and be lazy for the time that I was actually awake. So I stayed in bed, typed up my notes from the previous day, and organized everything for the long day to come. The cast was called to be on set around 2:00, but filming wasn't likely to begin until 3 or 4, and even then it was driving scenes- which means I definitely couldn't sit and watch the scene being filmed, as there's not much room in a moving vehicle for even all of the crew, and there wasn't a video village set up yet, so I didn't rush to get there. I took my time driving to Vernonia Oregon, enjoying the unseasonably warm and sunny day- again, a very nice change from the downpour of a few days before! Vernonia is about an hour and change north of Portland, and I took the same road there that I took towards the coast on Wednesday, except well before I got to the mountains, I took a right turn onto a smaller highway that wove through the valleys. It was a beautiful road. It felt very similar to my drive through the Olympic National Forest in Washington as I approached the real Forks, WA, so



it was appropriate that I was now approaching the fictitious one. On this road in Oregon, just like the one in Washington, there were big pines and cedars on either side of the road, sharp curves with a stone wall on one side and an impressive drop off on the other, and as I was approaching the town of Vernonia, there in front of me was a giant sign that said, "The City of Forks Welcomes You!" It was brilliant. It was an exact replica of the actual sign welcoming you to Forks in Washington.

I noticed this attention to detail a few weeks ago when, looking at [set photos](#) (thanks bellaandedward.com for the thoroughness of your galleries!), I saw that the crew had created the

Forks High School sign exactly like the real sign in Forks, and now again with this “The City of Forks Welcomes You” sign. This further proved to me that the crew was taking their job seriously, and were willing to spend a few extra bucks and put forth a little extra effort to have the details that will mean so much to the author, fans and residents of Forks, WA.



The attention to detail continued as I drove into downtown Vernonia and saw signs for 101 North (101 does run through Oregon, but nowhere near Vernonia, and it's the main highway that goes through Forks to Port Angeles, so these signs were planted for extra authenticity), Forks City Hall, Forks Hardware, Forks Police Station and general signs that would be placed in downtown Forks. 'Downtown' may be deceiving as it was really just one street with a couple of bars, a bank, some antique shops

and a mini town-square... it was very, very small, but so is Forks, WA. If you look back to [my post about the Twilight Pilgrimage](#), you'll see a vivid description of Forks, and Vernonia did a fine job of playing the role of a tiny town in the Pacific Northwest. I parked my car on one of the side streets between base camp and the main street where they were filming, and went in search of Greg, Wyck or Gillian. I didn't find them easily but it wasn't pressing for me to do so, so I once again stayed out of the way and took in all of the action going on around me.



They were filming general background shots of Forks to use in panning, intro shots etc. Again, it was supposed to be a rainy day in Forks and Mother Nature wasn't helping, so the monstrous water truck repeated its action of wetting down the street every few minutes to give the appearance that it had just rained. They were about to yell 'action' so I ducked into an alley to get out of the shot and ended up talking to a girl named Catherine, who was one of Bella's photo doubles, for a bit. She was very friendly.

We were both trying to stay out of the shot, so there's not much else to do but chat when you're stuck in an alley! She said the filming had been a really good time, the cast and crew were very pleasant, that she liked working with Kristen Stewart, and while she didn't want the filming to end, she was excited to be able to trim her hair! The only thing she was allowed to do to her appearance during the whole of filming was cut her fingernails so her appearance wouldn't change from that of Bella's. It's crazy the things that I never thought about in the filmmaking process...

During a break in the filming, we peeked our heads around the corner to see what was going on just as Deon Boyce, the second assistant director, was walking down the street directing the extras on where to go. He looked at Catherine and me and said, "You guys, over there, cross the street to that corner when they yell 'background'."..... My internal response was... "WHAT?! You want me to be somewhere on film???" And my composed, external response was, "Deon, I'm not an extra, I'm not even a part of the crew," and Catherine's response was, "Deon, I look just like Bella, I probably shouldn't be in the shot." But he put us there anyway. He assured us that it was just for some background movement, Catherine wouldn't be recognized, and I didn't have to do it if I didn't want

to but it was fine if I did. Well of course I wanted to! I highly doubt you'll be able to see me, I'm sure I'll end up on the cutting room floor, but it was quite the adventure to be an extra for twenty minutes on the set of Twilight! Catherine stayed behind me as we crossed the street, just so I could hopefully give her a little bit of cover, so if you see a long shot of the main street of Forks, with two people crossing the street very far away, one of them looks like Bella and the other is wearing jeans, a black top and a backpack... you will have just seen my film debut. It was silly, but certainly a good story, and it gave a little excitement to the afternoon as it was most definitely a slow afternoon. I did get to see Catherine Hardwicke's family again which was very nice. They didn't stay long as Catherine was very busy and there wasn't a lot to watch, but I'm glad I got to say goodbye and thank them for all of the kindness that they shared with me on set.

As the afternoon turned into evening, all of the driving shots were finished (Bella and Charlie in the cruiser, Edward and Bella pulling up to the station in the Volvo, and Carlisle with his Mercedes), and by about 7 or 8, we broke for 'lunch.' I sat with a few crew members who dealt with the greens on set. That's right, there's a whole team devoted to dressing the sets with trees, bushes, foliage and flowers. They hide set equipment and cover up elements that the directors don't want to be included in a scene. For example, there was a big sign outside of the bank that said the time and temperature that didn't quite work for the shot, so they covered it with a camouflage tarp and placed a number of tall, skinny evergreens in buckets in front of it. I literally did not know it was there until the very end of the night when they started taking down the cover. It is so interesting to see the details that go into these films, and the sheer number of people it takes to pull off one scene!



Anyway... after lunch/dinner/whatever meal I was eating at the 'start' of my day at 8pm, I meandered back towards the credit union that was doubling as the Forks Police Department for the evening. Video village was now set up behind the bank (in the drive-through, nonetheless) and I was glad to see the comforting bank of monitors, and the various directors chairs set up for the night's filming. I dropped off my stuff, was handed a set of cans (Yay! It really made all the difference to hear the cast and crew in order to know what was actually going on in and behind the scenes), and walked around to the front of the building to watch the lighting being rigged and say good evening to Gillian. We chatted for a bit about the script's journey: how it gets from the director to the screenwriter, to the author, to the producer, to the studio, and back through the circuit again in the writing process, and in the middle of our conversation, a couple led their miniature pony right by us, effectively halting our speech. I told Gillian that this was the third or fourth time that they had paraded the pony by the set, as I had seen him a few times during the day, and that I thought they were hoping to get him into the film. Gillian looked at the pony critically and said, "Hmm... I wonder if Catherine [Hardwicke] has seen that," with a smile. Sadly the little pony didn't make the film, but he did watch the action with his owners for hours. Literally hours... there was a whole slew of fans and town residents who just watched the filming until about 3am. That's dedication right there...

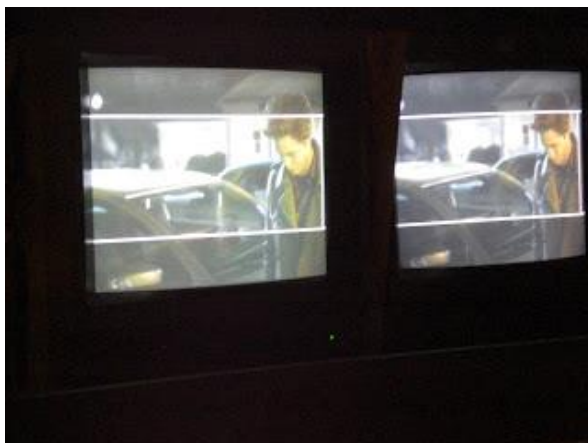
Eventually they set up the shot for a scene in front of the police station. This was an added scene so I can't go into much detail (I'm sorry! I know that's annoying!) but it was basically a small addition to enhance the menacing aspects of the nomads... something that I personally think is quite necessary; because if you think about the nomads in the books, they are the real villains, the 'bad' vampires, and we have very little introduction to them even to realize how scary they can be. We only see the Cullens, the 'good guys,' and while we can hear Edward say that he'll be more protective over Bella



because the nomads are around, there isn't a lot of time for us as readers to get to know these characters before they are suddenly a huge threat. In the film, there is even less time to come to that realization, and I'm guessing that the nomads are going to be the main threat/conflict in the film... so they're going to have to build that up a little bit. Anyway, this scene involved Carlisle, Bella and Edward. It was short, but certainly effective. The scene took place well into the film, and I could tell that Bella and Edward were a definite couple

at this point, as Rob and Kristen played it so that they appeared much more comfortable with each other (as comfortable as Edward could ever be in close proximity to Bella, anyway). It was also neat to see the relationship between Carlisle and Edward, as I've read that this is something Rob was fascinated by and asked Stephenie Meyer about extensively when she visited the set. Carlisle is fatherly and mentoring, but never patronizing. It was pleasant to see the relationship as a caring camaraderie. This was my first time seeing Carlisle, and I was blown away by his appearance, and by Peter Facinelli's embodiment of him. He just was Carlisle. He oozed Carlisle. As you can tell by the pictures that are all over the internet, he certainly embodies an ethereal beauty, but even his mannerisms, the way he holds his hands in his pockets, his upturned eyes when listening to Edward speak... it was difficult to think of him as Peter, when all I saw was Carlisle!

Similarly, it was also my first time seeing Charlie Swan, played by Billy Burke. Billy Burke isn't what I had in mind for Charlie (I don't know about anyone else, but I pictured a middle-aged, overweight kind of a guy... I'm thinking Cliff from Cheers or something similar), but again, once I heard Billy talk, saw him in uniform, and witnessed his interactions with Bella, I could see how this guy could definitely be Charlie. He had that rough exterior, the lack of outward affection towards Bella but a strong undercurrent of love for her that you couldn't help but notice. I suppose Billy Burke is more the correct age than Cliff from Cheers anyway! The scene that they filmed between him and Bella on this particular evening will probably only be about 45 seconds on-screen, but it took well over an hour to get just right. They filmed the scene many times with both of them in the shot, then many times focusing just on Charlie, and many times focusing just on Bella. These scenes will then be edited together to pick the best of each moment to create a fluid and effective scene.



So while they were filming this scene, the rest of the cast was milling about, relaxing in their trailers, perhaps napping as it was about 3am at this point, and I was sitting behind the bank/police station in video village with Greg and Gillian. We were chatting around the propane heater (again, thank the gods for



propane heaters; it's truly the only reason I made it through the night) as filming wasn't occurring at that moment, and who should walk around the corner of the building? None other than Rob Pattinson himself. Well, he shuffled around the corner more than walked as it was frigid, he wasn't in a thick coat and oh yes, it was still 3am- we were all knackered. He came and joined us around the heater and we just chatted for about twenty minutes. Talk about surreal... yes, there was certainly

that moment where I panicked a bit internally (do you really think there's any way he could stand 6 inches from me and I wouldn't swoon internally??), but slowly, very slowly, I realized he's just a guy, he's at work, we were both cold, slightly bored by the current lack of action, and in his case, wiped out from 45 days of filming in crazy conditions. We chatted easily about all manner of things (some are rather un-bloggable), but not about my work, as I didn't want to impose on his relaxing time and turn into That Crazy Person.... so I just talked with him normally. I do wish I'd have been able to chat with him about being away from the UK, reminisce about our favorite British microbrews and winge about the miserable time difference (try having a meeting on the phone with your supervisor when you're eight hours behind her! I imagine he's having the same kind of pain with his friends and family!), but I'm grateful just for the exposure to an actor on set, and one as kind, funny and pleasant...not to mention as handsome, as Rob; it's certainly not all glamorous, the hours can be long, the expectations high and the boredom factor ever-present. You could be sitting around for hours and within two minutes, you have to be ready to shoot a scene where your loved one's life is in danger or you have to recreate a first kiss a hundred times over... I can't imagine living any part of my day 'normally' when you need to tap into that kind of emotion at a moment's notice.

So it was lovely to meet Rob Pattinson. He's an easy-going, amusing guy. He's certainly focused on his work, but doesn't seem to be ruled by it. He was mulling over his future activities, jobs, possibilities, and all of them sounded lovely but he didn't feel the need to pin down what would be perfect for him at this minute or what would be the best for his career. He's just a guy in his early 20's, and like a lot of us, he just seems to be going with the flow and seeing how things figure themselves out and trying to have as much fun as he can in the process.

The night/morning went on, and soon it was evident that the action was winding down (it was about 5am, and believe it or not, there were still a few dedicated fans on the corner!), as the trees were removed, signs taken down and lights extinguished. Of course I was hesitant to leave as I really didn't want any of this experience to end, but, alas, it had to. As much as I wanted to camp out in video village for a few more weeks and keep absorbing all of the information around me, they were packing up, and I still had over an hour to drive home. I returned my cherished cans, sought out Greg, Wyck and Gillian and thanked them profusely for all of their time, honesty and kindness on the set. I'm not sure if it's in their job description to be that kind, but they went above and beyond anything that I had been expecting. I already can't wait to hear about their upcoming adventures involving the marketing, editing, scoring and promoting of Twilight... not to mention the work that should begin soon on New Moon.

(EDIT: Apparently that last comment was misleading... there is nothing confirmed yet for *New Moon*. Everyone seems to be thinking about it (how could they not?), and they're hoping to start writing this summer, and start filming sometime in the spring; but the rights haven't even been settled yet and Stephenie Meyer is slightly busy with *The Host* release... so no confirmation about it yet!)

So I left the set of *Twilight* drowsy but smiling, with a thousand thoughts congealing in my head. I watched the sun rise over the Oregon hills as I flopped into bed at 6:30am, blissfully exhausted and forever grateful for this amazing experience.

But just to leave you hanging... I do still have more things coming! I got into a couple of great conversations with Wyck about adaptations and Greg about film budgets and how that can affect the overall integrity of a film (cough *Eragon* cough), but they will have to be topics explored more thoroughly later... so stay tuned for that!

Comment away! The more action on the blog, the more it gets me thinking and producing additional information!

Check out all of my webshots from the day in Forks/Vernonia [here](#).

Sorry there aren't a lot of them; that whole 'no flash' rule plus most of the filming being inside moving cars or inside buildings didn't allow for a lot of photo taking!

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Posted by ScullingOnSquam at [Wednesday, May 07, 2008](#) [27 comments](#)  [Links to this post](#)

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Friday, May 02, 2008

[A Few Notes](#)



Hello! I just wanted to check in and say yes, my day three report about the all-night shoot is coming, probably early next week. I'm still in the process of organizing all of my notes and wrapping my head around the whole experience; luckily there have been lots of other *Twilight* updates for all of us recently so I can't imagine you've been pining away for my news!

I wanted to answer a couple of the questions I got in the comments (I LOVE when people leave comments on the blog. It's really nice to have feedback and know that something I'm doing is exciting for someone else).

1) What do the stand-ins do? Are they acting out scenes or are they stunt doubles or what?

-stand ins exist in nearly EVERY film. They are the body doubles for the actors while the crew is setting up the shot. They are generally the same height and coloring/body structure of the actual actor, and they stay in the actors position while the lighting and sound crew set up the shot. Shots can take anywhere from 15 minutes to two hours to set up sometimes, so instead of having Kristen Stewart or Rob Pattinson spend hours just standing before they actually work the scene, the stand-ins do that to get the light right. Then the actors are brought in to make sure everything is right, and then shoot the scene.

2) Where did you get the songs for your 'playlist'?

-most of them are from Stephenie Meyer's myspace page. She has a great playlist of songs by Muse, Linkin Park, Red Jumpsuit Apparatus (I'm slightly obsessed with Your Guardian Angel, listen to it and just think about Edward), My Chemical Romance, Brand New... there's a ton! I took off a few that I'm not a big fan of (Evanescence for one...) but most of them were new, and great, and now associated with Twilight and therefore I like them that much more. So after I got a few from her myspace page, I bought a bunch more songs by those artists and put them together in one big playlist. It's a great mix to run to. I start with Linkin Park's Papercut and it's an all-out power push for the rest!

3) What do you intend to do with the degrees once you graduate? I am asking because my son would love to follow in your footsteps, but he would also like to be employed

-To be honest, I don't know what I'll do with this when I'm done. What I do know, is that I will be able to do a multitude of things. I've never been one of those people who's like, "I'm doing this because I want to be _____ when I grow up." I pretty much just live for the moment, and right now, I know that a PhD can't hurt me in anyway, I'm studying what I love, and I'm pretty much blissfully happy.

The other reason why I can't say what I'll do when I'm done is that I'm learning every day what opportunities even exist for someone like me. Originally I was thinking about doing a PhD in English Literature, and I realize now how limiting that would have been for me. Not that it's a bad degree, but I'd basically be an expert in one area of literature and that wasn't enough for me- my interests are too varied; true I could teach, work in publishing, or anything involving PR or human resources, but that didn't really call to me. So far with this degree (PhD Film and New Media), I've discovered that I can work in film, game design, publishing, online companies, reviews, magazines... the list goes on, and I'm learning new options every day.

Basically it's going to be a degree that says I'm motivated, productive and I can read and write. There aren't many jobs out there where it will *hurt* me to have a PhD. I start teaching back in Wales in the fall, so we'll see how that goes and how I like it, but to be honest I'd quite like to have some time working in the film/media industry. I certainly like the opportunities for creativity, expression, adaptation, possible connections... and I can teach while I'm doing that, or get 'real world' experience and then teach... I don't know! Really, I'm still figuring it out. I'm not closing any doors,



trying to open as many as I can, trying not to limit myself in any way, get tons of experience, and just keep working my bum off to learn as much as I can in these few short years. But I'm fairly confident that I won't be jobless in any way shape or form when I've completed the degree.

That was a long-winded answer and I'm happy to rattle on more if you ever have a question, but those are the thoughts in my head at the moment!

As a side note, my department put a [link from the University's website](#) about my time on the Twilight set. And no need to comment on how they misspelled Stephenie's last name! I've already emailed them about it and they apologized and will be changing it! :)

Thanks again for all of the comments; it's been great to share all of these experiences!

More soon, I swear :)

Posted by ScullingOnSquam at [Friday, May 02, 2008 5 comments](#) [Links to this post](#)

Thursday, May 01, 2008

[Twilight Set, Day Two: St. Helen's OR, Port Angeles scenes](#)

Twilight Set Day Two: St. Helen's OR- Port Angeles scenes

Unlike the day before, my second day on the set of Twilight was gorgeous- bright blue skies, a light breeze, and a very welcoming and maneuverable setup situated around the town square of St. Helen's Oregon, which was doubling as Port Angeles for the day. The town itself is a great location for Port Angeles. Of course it looks slightly different, but it held the same small-town atmosphere that I felt in the real Port Angeles. It's about a 45 minute drive outside of Portland and on the water. The main street is mostly antique shops with a shoe repair place, a movie theater, a hair salon and one or two cafes as well.

When I arrived around noon they were filming the dress shopping scene with Jessica and Angela. Of course the weather once again wasn't working for them; while it was gorgeous, it was supposed to be a rainy day in Port Angeles, so a mammoth water truck sprayed the street down every fifteen minutes or so to make it look as though it had just rained. It was close quarters inside for this scene,



so I watched from outside. The store, actually a hair salon, had been transformed into a small town dress shop, again, not far from what I was picturing for dress shopping in Port Angeles. There were a few racks of prom gowns, accessories, dress-clad mannequins and the cast lounging around between takes. During this scene, Bella is sitting in the window while admiring Jessica and Angela's dresses and the Frat Boys make an appearance, banging on the window and harassing Bella- further proof that they are pig-headed imbeciles. It was the Frat Boys' final scene, so once "cut" was yelled on their bugging action, they received a round of applause from the cast and crew and signed off of their Twilight experience.



The next scene was shot down the street- the infamous restaurant scene where Edward spills some of his secrets while Bella forces down mushroom ravioli (again, I felt such sympathy for Kristen Stewart... I have no idea how much ravioli she had to eat, but I'm sure it was more than she wished for!). Setting up



the scene took quite some time as it was still daylight but they wanted to give the appearance of evening. All of the windows were covered in black cloth, white Christmas lights were strung over the trellis and the surrounding trees, and a big wooden toad sat on a stump next to the sign proclaiming the restaurant as "The Bloated Toad." So it was no Bella Italia as it was in the book, I'm not sure why the change to "The Bloated Toad," but it still looked just as I thought it should. One of the set dressers said they just found the carved, wooden toad on their travels and thought it was great and had to use it. I guess that's as good of a reason as any to name your fictitious restaurant after an ill amphibian!

Once again I stayed on the periphery at first and tried to observe, but stay out of the way. The nice thing was that there always seemed to be a few people doing just what I was doing, and it was pleasant and easy to start a conversation with them. A woman standing next to me asked how I was involved, I told her my story of my studies and how they were nice enough to have me on set for a few days, and she told me that she was Catherine Hardwicke's sister, Irene, and that she, her husband Lance and her mother Jamie were all on set that day watching Catherine work (Catherine is



the director- IMDB her, she's amazing). They were absolutely lovely. They are funny, friendly, they enjoyed every aspect of the experience as I did, and after about forty five minutes I felt like I was with my own family. We took some pictures, wandered the town a bit, and then headed to the catering tent for lunch. While enjoying our gourmet meal and chatting about the striking good looks of Rob Pattinson at the next table, Catherine herself came over to chat with the family. Irene introduced me to her with great gusto and Catherine was so gracious

and enthusiastic. I definitely got the feeling that she is the kind of creative artist who can see the whole picture of everything around her but is able to focus intently and specifically whenever it is required. She asked me a few questions, and then summed up her thoughts about the adaptation of Twilight. She said that in one way, the film takes you further than the book does. She said “we can take you up in the trees and actually show you all of that crazy beautiful stuff. It takes you on a ride.” Like Wyck told me yesterday, she emphasized that this was a very contained book, as most of it was internal, in Bella’s mind. “With The Lord of the Rings you have this huge kingdom at your disposal. Forks isn’t naturally like that, so we expanded all of the action to bring it out, to make it more visual.” She added a few scenes and tweaked existing ones to make it more visual and have this 2D media translate to the screen, but all while focusing on the story and never straying far from the original work.

After this unexpected but extremely welcome interview, Catherine and Irene went on a hunt for the perfect mini-lamp to light Bella and Edward’s dinner table. After procuring said lamp and spray painting the bulb to the correct level of dimness, the scene was nearly ready to begin filming. I made my way to ‘video village’ which is a bank of monitors with director’s chairs set up to watch the filming that was going on inside. Ironically, the actors don’t really use the chairs, so I sat in Rob Pattinson’s chair for most of the day. The producers handed me a set of cans (headphones) so I could hear the dialogue and then I don’t think I picked my head up for about three hours. I’m afraid I can’t share the dialogue of the scene, but I can say that it was beautiful, their tones and intentions were spot on, Bella’s incredulous expressions were perfect and Edward’s eyes smoldered as they should. And the perfect mini-lamp looked perfect.

I’m a big fan of video village. It’s certainly exciting to watch the scene filmed live, but I also greatly enjoyed watching the scene as it would look on the screen. How the camera is angled, how it catches their eyes, and how people and props are strategically placed to frame the shot exactly as they want it framed. The cans were also great because not only could I hear the dialogue, but also the chatter between takes. The talk between Rob and Kristen, the comments by Catherine or Jamie Marshall (assistant director and co-producer), and the instruction, thought, and intent put into each shot before action was called. At one point Rob said, “I felt like I was falling apart during that take...” and Catherine told him, “Then go with it. Fall apart. Fall into her. You are falling so into her, just use that.” And of course the following take was flawless.



Irene, Lance and Jamie joined me in video village for awhile, as well as Gillian Bohrer, the creative executive from Summit Entertainment- the studio behind Twilight. Gillian, like Greg and Wyck, was another fountain of friendly and helpful information. She was eager to share her story, her thoughts on the adaptation and the details of Twilight’s journey from page to screen. I asked all three of them (Wyck, Greg and Gillian) if they ever re-read sections of the book before filming to refresh the scene in their mind and they agreed that like a good student, they try always to keep re-reading; not just to

read for the test, but know the material and have it be fresh in their minds all of the time. It isn't feasible for them to reread all of the time as they have dailies to watch, scripts to go over for the following days filming, and paperwork to complete every night, but they also said that at this point, the script has gone through so much work, and Stephenie Meyer has approved every line of it, that when the time rolls around for filming they can work off of the script alone and know that it still reflects the original work.

After another hour or two in video village, I realized, however, that this group of people really didn't need to keep re-reading the book to keep it fresh in their minds. They were able to rattle off whole passages from memory, they could complete entire character conversations between them, and the one time there was a discrepancy over an aspect of the book (we got into a debate about the waitress's hairstyle) the book came out and we found the tell-tale paragraph. Every aspect of this gave me a sense of their commitment to the film. In a video interview recently (I think it was the mtv.com video) Rachel Lefevre, who plays Victoria, said "It's not enough for any of us that this is just a fun, good-time, vampire romp love story. That's not enough. We want it to be real," and you can see that in every member of the cast, crew, and production.



I'm rambling now... so that scene was brilliant. I got some great information, I felt productive and incredibly inspired by the work happening there. They finished the inside shots of Bella and Edward at dinner, and then they moved outside to film the scene where Bella and Edward come to the restaurant just as Jessica and Angela were finishing and Edward offers to get Bella dinner. It was nice to be outside and moving around (it was frigid, so movement and hot tea were very welcome). While I was outside I met some of the

Twilight Moms, another [Twilight](#) fan site. They were also a friendly bunch and enthusiastic about all that they had seen that day and eager to hear what I had seen too. Also on the sidewalk was probably half the town's population of St. Helens watching the action. Granted they probably couldn't see a lot other than a giant crane and lights, but they didn't seem disappointed.



We passed midnight while gathered around the propane heater (thank god for the propane heater, I think it's the only reason I still have ten toes) and got the call sheet for the final day of shooting in Oregon. It was going to be an all-night shoot, starting around 4 and most likely not finishing until dawn the next day. Therefore, I drove home, and promptly went to bed, leaving my notes to be typed up the following morning. I think this was my most beneficial day; it gave me all sorts of new insight, stimulus and excitement,

plus I felt very welcomed, included, and encouraged by all of these new, interesting, and very friendly people.

Check out all of the pictures [here](#).

I beamed the whole way home, and was eager for the next adventure: an all-night shoot in Vernonia, OR. Up next: scenes with the Volvo and cruiser, unique additions, good conversation, and a crazy 'extra' opportunity for yours truly.

Posted by ScullingOnSquam at [Thursday, May 01, 2008 41 comments](#)  [Links to this post](#)

Labels: [Fantasy Film Adaptation](#), [St. Helen's](#), [Stephenie Meyer](#), [twilight film set](#)

Tuesday, April 29, 2008

[Twilight Set, Day One: Ecola State Park- La Push scenes](#)



*Author's Note: I was on set for three days, so there's going to be at least three different entries- it was just too much good information to condense into one entry. It will most likely end up being more like four or five entries as I think I'm going to need to explore a few things about the adaptation process essay-style, but I'll at least have an entry per day that I was on set. So here's Day One, the others will be soon to follow.

[Ecola State Park, Indian Beach- La Push](#)

[scenes](#)

The day was a bit of an adventure from the very beginning. I decided to leave Portland ridiculously early because I'm a smidge anal and never want to risk missing something due to delays (I'm the kind of person who arrives four hours before a domestic flight). So I left Portland at 8, even though I didn't have to be at Cannon Beach until 11:30. My first sign that the day was going to be an event was when the temperature gauge on my rented Subaru read 31 degrees and these white things were hitting my windshield. Snow! Snow was falling, heavily, and quickly accumulating on the ground. That was fine, but as I descended through the pass, all of those fluffy white flakes turned into big, fat raindrops. The day promised to be a very wet one, so I was very grateful for my rain suit and Wellies!

Of course I was incredibly early, so I went to breakfast at a local diner and prepped my notes for the day, all while listening to the hammer of the rain on the windows and roof.

I had agreed to meet Peter Silbermann, the film's publicist, at Base Camp, and after much confusion, two trips in the company van, finding a parking spot on the set and wandering down towards the beach, our paths finally crossed. Peter was gracious and welcoming, although I'm guessing he was initially a bit wary of me. He has been fending off rabid fans and set-crashers for 43 days of filming, and I'm sure he was hoping I wasn't a part of that over-zealous crowd. By the end of the day I think he was confident I wasn't going to run naked across the set or steal anything from Rob Pattinson's trailer, as I was invited back for the subsequent day of filming.

This first day on set, they were filming the scene where Bella (played by Kristen Stewart) is walking down the beach of La Push and Jacob (Taylor Lautner) is telling her the legend of 'The Cold Ones,' and the true nature of the Cullen family. I was still getting a feeling for the place: where I would be most out of the way but still able to observe things, and perhaps even where I could stay dry, so I just stood along the beach watching the sound guys set up, the lighting placed and replaced, the script supervisor double checking that the correct



words were being uttered, the director running between all of these groups and the actors contemplating and waiting patiently to bring this pivotal scene from the book to life. They were filming on Indian Beach; a gentle crescent of sand, ringed in piles of sea-smoothed stones that stop abruptly at a sixty-foot cliff wall. Having seen the actual La Push a few weeks ago, this is actually more of what I pictured in my head for the beach. I found the actual La Push to be more developed than I thought it would be, and this beach at Ecola State park was remote, untouched, covered in multiple-colored stones, adjacent to a notorious cliff and the beach was covered in driftwood. Not as much as the actual La Push beach, but it still perfectly served my imagination for the location for this scene.

While staring at the scene with sheets of rain pouring over everything, I was introduced to Joan, Peter's wife and a lovely, lovely lady. She pointed out who was who on the beach, giggled alongside me when we caught a glimpse of Kristen Stewart and Catherine Hardwicke, and explained what a few of the terms that I didn't know were. Also on the beach were some of the staff of the Twilight Lexicon website. They are the number one [Twilight](#) fan site, and very pleasant people to be around. They are certainly fans and avid supporters of the books, films, and everything [Twilight](#), but they are professional, patient and very friendly; and as they were also invited to the set by Peter, it was



obvious that they did not fall into the category of crazy gate-crasher fans either. The crew filmed the scene numerous times from many angles, with Catherine Hardwicke running to the actors between takes to discuss their lines, facial expressions and expectations for each take. As this scene was wrapping up, they were originally planning on setting up the bonfire scene at the other end of the beach, but Mother Nature had other plans.

The rain was like standing under a waterfall. It pooled in every slightly sunken spot and gushed in tidal rivers down to the sea. It not only made delivering lines difficult, but it was dangerous for the crew, so they decided to change the location of the scene. I found this immediate change to the story to be really interesting. Of course my initial reaction to anything changing from the book is usually shock and disgust; I normally think of it as sacrilege... but the more time I spent on this set and the more time I've spent studying adaptations, I realize that there is no way for the film to be a perfect recreation of the book. It is going to be a new version of the book. Everything written must be conveyed visually, and possibly very differently than the image we have created in our minds; as a different medium, we can't expect to have the same tools utilized to execute the feelings of the books. Just as we use different language in writing a letter to someone than we do in conversation, film has to be more fluid, and readily adaptable to appeal more visually. That being said, this film may have changed a number of things that I was surprised about, but the structure and spirit of the novel is always in the forefront of any change. It also helps that Stephenie Meyer, the author, was so involved in the adaptation process. She has read every word of the script and has approved it. She has said that she realizes that this is a different medium and certain changes need to occur; not only does she permit them, but she comes up with many of them and has even said that she wished she had thought of a few of the added elements herself!

Additionally, I began to realize that this is a workplace; the cast and crew have to adhere to certain levels of safety and time constraints, so they couldn't wait around for the sky to clear to film a bonfire scene just because that's how it was in the book. Instead, they moved the location to the opened door of Tyler's parked van, and had the kids talking just as they would have been talking around the fire; the action was not interrupted and the dialogue, while perhaps not word for word from the book, translated the exact same feeling (at least to me) as the text of Twilight does. I did

feel bad for Kristen Stewart by the end of it though as she had to eat Red Vines throughout the scene; I can't even imagine how many she consumed. She must have been sick!





It was great to see these actors embrace the characters, live, in person. It didn't take more than 10 seconds to believe that Kristen Stewart was Bella. She is a serious and dedicated actress who is most definitely channeling all that Bella encompasses; she seemed to be very internal, processing and preparing herself before every shot. Granted I haven't seen a lot of actors in action, but I was very impressed by her process and performances. Not one of the actors struck me as incorrect, flippant or lackadaisical. There seemed to be a general respect for the work, and certainly a pleasant camaraderie among the actors both on and off camera. This was evident as they were goofing around in the catering tent just as I'm sure Sam, Embry and Jacob would have been rough-housing in their own down time too. I was also struck by the costuming of the actors. Sam, Embry and Jacob were dressed in an eclectic mix of teenage punk-wear, complete with converses and skinny jeans, and traditional tribal wear like woven blankets and knives. Bella had a simple maroon rain coat and adorable wellies, and Jessica's pony-tailed head was covered by a cute pageboy cap.



Although the weather was tough- in fact all but one member of the crew agreed that it was the worst day of shooting they'd ever had in their careers (the one was stuck on K2 once and the helicopter couldn't get up there to get them... certainly worse!)- the downtime during the squalls ended up being a very welcome thing as it gave me ample opportunities to talk with some members of the cast, as well as two of the wonderful producers, Greg Mooradian and Wyck Godfrey. Greg was one of the first people involved in the project, as it was he who first came upon Twilight before it was even published. He secured the rights, and was involved in the adaptation process from day one. I asked him why this book stood out amongst others that he had read, and he said that it wasn't the prose or structure of Meyer's work, and it wasn't just the vampires. He saw "love story, love story, love story." He said there was something so engaging about the "out of town girl who falls for the guy that her parents wouldn't approve of, and is just taken in by the force of this first love; the struggle for love over death....giving up life to live forever with love." He was "riveted by that conflict and [he] had never seen *that* film before." He said he was sold the minute that Bella asked Edward how long he had been seventeen and Edward replied, "Awhile." From that point on he was enthralled, and assumed that others would be swept up in the story just as he was; obviously others have been, as Twilight is a number one New York Times bestseller and it was the most recent book in the Twilight series, Eclipse, that knocked Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows out of the number one spot.

Greg's passion and enthusiasm for the work is evident as he describes working with Catherine Hardwicke (the director), Melissa Rosenberg (the screenwriter) and Stephenie Meyer (the author) to create a visually stunning film, full of excitement and action that never strays from the underlying love story of the book. His continuous mantra was "keep your eye on the prize." Whatever adapting they had to do in order to make the successful novel translate into a successful film could never take away or cheapen the "prize" that was the love story between Bella and Edward. He emphasized that "everything we did came back to that." They have made minor changes, particularly with regard to the location of some scenes that are static in the book (i.e. a discussion between Bella and Edward in

the car might be moved outside so other things are happening visually instead of just the inside of the car), and they have admittedly beefed up some of the action sequences to make it visually exciting as well as more cross-genre. I couldn't help but wonder if this move may appeal to guys who are forced to accompany their girlfriends to the film- they may surprise themselves and actually end up enjoying the film for its great story as well as its kick-ass stunts, fights and super-hero elements.

I then spoke to Wyck Godfrey, a veteran producer who has worked on a number of adaptations from Eragon to I, Robot, to The Nativity Story with Hardwicke and now Twilight, I asked him what was different about this film than other films he has worked on. He paused a moment, and then said, "I think this is the purest adaptation I've ever worked with. Even The Nativity Story, which was very close to the gospel and we had a great researcher working on that... this was just bang on. We went to great lengths to keep every beat that worked in the books and that the fans would be looking for." Like Greg, he admitted that many things had to change because so much of the story was internal, in Bella's mind, so it was difficult to dramatize that inner-action, but he read the book, and then read the script, and was floored by how close they were to each other.

We continued to chat for awhile about other works at which I was looking, they joked with me about working on "three good adaptations, and two bad adaptations," (I'm assuming The Dark is Rising and The Golden Compass are the bad ones in their eyes, as they are in mine), we shared as many synonyms for rain, downpour, deluge etc. that we could come up with, and I was grilled about what the heck took me to Wales and how was I in Oregon at the drop of a hat if I was in school there. Lots of explaining commenced! At this point, of course Mother Nature laughed at us again as halfway through the filming of the van scene the skies began to clear, the rain stopped, and this thing called the Sun poked out from behind the craggy cliffs. Silly Oregon weather...



Sadly it was too late to set up the bonfire scene, but at least the end of the days filming had a bit of sunshine, just as it did in the book.



It was the final day of shooting for most of the humans (Jacob, Mike, Tyler, Sam, Embry...) so there were many hugs exchanged and cheers from the crew for a job well done. I snapped a few gorgeous pictures of the Oregon coast, of the director exalting in the experience, said goodbye to the Twilight Lexicon staff, and then left Ecola Park to head back to Portland for the evening, stoked for what my next day would bring me, but anxious to get dry and warm!



Reelz.com was there the same day that I was, and they've [just released a video](#) of their day on set. It gives you a nice visual of the day!

Next: Port Angeles (as played by St. Helen's, OR); dress shopping, the infamous restaurant scene, and meeting some very special guests.

Posted by ScullingOnSquam at [Tuesday, April 29, 2008](#) [12 comments](#) [✉](#) [Links to this post](#)

Labels: [Ecola State Park](#), [Fantasy Film Adaptation](#), [La Push](#), [Stephenie Meyer](#), [twilight film set](#)

Friday, April 25, 2008



[Twilight Set report on its way](#)



Just thought I'd check in and say that the last few days have been incredible and that a full set report will be coming in the next few days/weeks. There aren't enough adjectives to emphasize the last few days. As a groupie it was brilliant to meet 'Edward' and 'Bella' and see the visual depiction of these characters that we've grown to love immensely, but from an experiential stance.... this has been such a great exposure to the filmmaking process. My kudos are unending to Greg and Wyck, two of the producers, who shared with me their thoughts and experiences in the adaptation process and allowed me to remain close to the action and observe the filming.

The first day on set was at Ecola State National Park filming the La Push scenes where Jacob tells Bella what the Cullens actually are, yesterday was in St. Helen's filming the dress-shop scene with Angela and Jessica, and then the dinner scene after Edward saves Bella from the frat boys and he spills the beans that he can read minds. Tonight is their final day of shooting in Oregon and it's a night shoot, so that should be a chilly but exciting experience! Then they're off to LA for a couple of days and then they're done!

Here are a couple of pictures to whet the appetites for my next posts which will be more fleshed out, and detail filled. They are: Kristen Stewart getting soaked on the beach (it was pouring. 99% of the cast and crew agreed it was the worst day of filming they've ever been in). The second picture is Catherine Hardwicke (director), then Taylor Lautner as Jacob, a screen shot of the restaurant scene between Edward (Robert Pattinson) and Bella (Kristen Stewart), and the scene outside of the restaurant. Enjoy!



Posted by ScullingOnSquam at [Friday, April 25, 2008 30 comments](#)  [Links to this post](#)

Labels: [twilight film set](#)

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

[Twilight Set! Wahoo!](#)



Get excited (well, at least I am)... I'm back in Portland after a week at home in Pennsylvania, and I'm heading to the *Twilight* set tomorrow! YAY! I think I might have come off a bit overzealous, but the film's publicist graciously agreed to allow me onto the set to observe.

Of course I'm looking forward to seeing the physical realization of the books I've been reading, but I'm quite excited from an

analytical point of view to truly see some of the adaptation issues that I've been studying in action. I'm looking forward to seeing how they use the script, if the novel is ever referred to during the filming, if the actors refer to it, if the script is a fluid thing that may change slightly depending on the actor's delivery etc... it will just be very interesting. I certainly hope that I get to chat with a few of the crew members and/or actors, but even if I'm just sitting quietly on the sidelines all day observing I think it will be very beneficial and a great foundational experience for my work. I mean, I keep reading about adaptations, and it will be nice to actually be able to refer to my own observations from the set of *Twilight*.

Very exciting. Look forward to another descriptive post soon. Plus, yay for being back in Portland! I love this city!

And here's the site for a great new *Twilight* video from MTV.com :) Enjoy

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=sD6DFloIXyE>



Posted by ScullingOnSquam at [Tuesday, April 22, 2008](#) [1 comments](#) [Links to this post](#)

Labels: [adaptation](#), [fantasy](#), [Stephenie Meyer](#), [Twilight film](#)

Thursday, April 10, 2008

[Pilgrimage for Twilight](#)

I've just finished the *Twilight* series for the second time in two weeks (there will be a fourth and final book coming out in August that I am very eagerly awaiting) and as I tend to not just read but instead obsess over things, I decided to create a *Twilight* playlist, listen to nothing else for two weeks, check

out every message board, fan site and photo gallery associated with the novels and their forthcoming movie, and plan a pilgrimage to the sites mentioned in Twilight. Namely Forks, La Push and Port Angeles, all in Washington State. Twilight, in short, is about a girl, Bella Swan, who moves from her mother's place in Phoenix, AZ to her father's in Forks, WA. She ends up falling in love with a boy named Edward Cullen who just happens to be a vampire. He and his family (6 other vampires) consider themselves 'vegetarians' (meaning they only drink the blood of animals, not humans) and they, too, reside in Forks due to the plentiful overcast days. Nearby on the Quileute reservation La Push, WA, Bella's best friend, Jacob Black is dealing with his own mythical dilemma as he discovers that he is a werewolf, and is the eternal enemy and predator of the vampires. Much drama, heartache, love, adventure and joy ensues as outside vampires plot Bella's death, Edward and his family accept her as one of their own, and she deals with questions of love, life and the impending eternity as a vampire.



I was supposed to spend this week on the set of *Twilight* which is being filmed around Portland, OR, but the person I was supposed to be shadowing quit her job last week (quit *Twilight*! I know! Crazy!) and kind of left me stranded. So I'm definitely disappointed about that, I'm still hoping to contact someone on the set to see if I can reschedule (let me know if anyone has any links!) but I'm trying to make the best of it. Before that disappointment surfaced though, I wanted to check out the real towns of the *Twilight* series so I could compare the book to the real locations, and compare those to the film representations. So I packed up for a couple of days and took off for the Olympic peninsula of Washington.



Heading off of the I-5, I meandered through seaside towns, withered logging villages and vast expanses of the Olympic National Forest until I arrived in the little town of Forks, Washington, population 3,175. It was later in the day than I had hoped it would be, so I decided to drive through the town of Forks and go to the beach at La Push first, then circle back and explore Forks more thoroughly.

La Push is the reservation where Jacob Black lives; friend of Bella Swan and werewolf of the Quileute tribe. I turned onto La Push road and encountered a whole lot of nothing

for about 14 miles. It was a pretty, wooded road with pines arching over the pavement, but there were no signs of human life until the actual town of La Push. 'Town' may be stretching it. La Push is filled with one family homes, trailers, a tribal heritage center, a chapel or two, and a number of run-down buildings. You could walk from one side to the other in about ten minutes and pass mostly homes. You won't find any Seven-Elevens or McDonalds here, although there were a number of signs for smoked salmon, and a new general store where you could purchase snacks, Quileute memorabilia, gas and firewood to use in the new adjacent campground and RV park. Also springing

up next to the RV park is an Oceanside resort. La Push seems to be emphasizing their tourism possibilities and utilize their unique heritage and gorgeous beaches.



Although different than I imagined it- as actual places always are from your imagination, after a few minutes it was easy to visualize Jacob walking out of one of the small houses down to his garage, or to picture Bella on First Beach waiting for him to meet her. Bella's cliffs are just down to the left, and while I didn't find a trail to them, I have no doubt that one exists and perhaps the more adventurous of the area have thrown themselves off of them in a lark of recklessness. It is certainly more touristy than I thought it would

be, although that may be a very recent development. I pictured La Push to be very private, off the beaten track, where heads raised when any car rolled into town, and almost an exclusive place where everyone knew everyone else and I would certainly stand out as the only white person within miles. Not so. They seem to be inviting the outside world with open arms and encouraging 'infiltration.' At least I felt like I was infiltrating. It didn't feel like the quiet, secluded, and sacred place that I imagined for Jacob and his pack.

After taking a dozen or so pictures of various aspects of La Push, I returned to Forks, stopping first in the tourism office as I figured that they would know about the Twilight books and be able to give me some idea about how they have reacted to their town being the epicenter of a battle between mythical races and a new pilgrimage location for avid fans. I pulled into the parking lot and a huge sign covering the majority of the main window proclaimed, "We (heart) Bella and Edward."



I took this as a good sign.



There was a couple already talking to the gentleman who was attending the center, so I wandered around the one room looking at fliers and the small collection of knick knacks that Forks had to offer. It was mostly information about logging, the National Forest and fish hatcheries, but there were two racks of handmade jewelry called 'love bites' that consisted of everything from necklaces to key chains that all contained hearts and two red rhinestones somewhere on the heart signifying a vampire bite. There was also a sign on the wall proclaiming "Forks

is ready for Twilight!” and another one stating “Vampires thrive in Forks.” I couldn’t help but chuckle. The gentleman was free at this point and I told him about my interest in the novels and the effect that they have had on the town. His eyes glimmered at my first mention of the books and he raised his arms above his head as I finished my sentence, clearly impatient to tell me all about Forks and Twilight. He handed me a packet of Twilight Sites in Forks (which consisted of the outdoor store, the drug store, the high school, and the police department), and a binder called The Twilight Lexicon that one of his coworkers had put together. It was filled with all of the local articles published about Twilight since the books’ release and information on the upcoming film. There were pictures of the main actors, interviews with the author and the local librarian, and letters that had been sent to Bella Swan, Edward Cullen, or Bella Cullen care of the Tourist Center. The town was obviously enthused about its place in the Twilight world.

So much so, that on September 13, 2007 (Bella's birthday) the town celebrated Stephenie Meyer day, celebrating the author who brought attention to their two stop-light town. Fans of Edward and Bella flocked to Forks and received a ‘hunting permit’ describing the Twilight sites, and a list of local businesses that were participating. The town’s police chief acted as Charlie Swan for the day and handed out PB & J sandwiches, the pharmacy handed out cloves of garlic, the Thriftway handed out plastic vampire teeth and sold black hats with ‘Vampires thrive in Forks’ embossed on them, and the convenience store printed black shirts with the words “My last Twilight. I was bitten in Forks, WA” in silver ink. Of course I bought a t-shirt, and I even contemplated heading to Sully’s Burger House for a Bella Burger or to the Subway and getting a Bella Special. Some members of the community seemed a bit miffed about the extra attention and the influx of out-of-towners taking pictures of the high school or the beach in La Push, but most were enthusiastic and pleased that their town had a special place in the hearts of Twilight’s fans.



It was certainly not a town that I would have gone out of my way to see, and it didn’t have any attractions to lure people into it but that was more endearing than anything else to me. It was nice to see the town just as it was; just as Bella and Edward experienced it. I’ve seen some screen shots from the film and now know that they are going for a cleaner, brighter, almost New-England looking town, although it was filmed in Oregon; the school in the film is a big, classic brick building as opposed to the dated and very small high

school in Forks, and the houses for the film are quaint, comforting homes and not missing a chimney, they don’t have a Big Wheel in the front yard and the majority of the buildings are probably permanent in the film and not mobile homes.



I'm glad to have seen the original Forks, however, because I think it gives a more complete feel of the alienation that Bella must have felt upon arriving. This whole town was just a smidge bigger than my high school was. I couldn't imagine coming from a diverse and cultured city like Phoenix to this isolated, quiet, and somewhat run-down town where the biggest event is the 'Rain Festival' in mid April. After visiting Forks however, I could imagine it a little bit better. It was clear to me the kind of house in which Bella lived, the limitations she really

encountered for dress shopping, and I found it difficult to grasp the idea that you'd have to drive at least an hour to get to the nearest movie theater let alone a major airport. The one, tiny airport in Forks is generally used as a drag speedway; they move the cars to the side when a plane needs to go through, "but that doesn't happen very often," as the gentleman at the tourism office informed me.

So after visiting the high school, the park, the police station, the medical center, the outfitters, grocery store and driving down all of the side streets (about three deep on either side of the main road), I figured I'd drive the 53 miles to Port Angeles and find a motel there for the night instead of Forks. Not that Forks didn't have a plentiful supply to choose from- the Forks Inn, Dew Drop Motel and about a dozen others, but I wanted to attempt to have dinner in the Italian restaurant that

Edward took Bella to in Port Angeles.



The drive from Forks to Port Angeles was probably the prettiest stretch of my trip. It was raining, and foggy, but that just further set the atmosphere of a secluded, mysterious and untapped location. The single-lane road wound around mountains, in and out of the protected woods of the Olympic Forest, and along the coasts of still lakes. It was easy to believe that there was no civilization within miles of my little rental car, and I half expected to catch a glimpse of a vampire on the hunt or a werewolf

prowling. Small signs of life started popping up along the highway (the occasional tavern amongst the plentiful fish hatcheries), and then as I crested a hill, there before me was a Shell station to welcome me into Port Angeles.

The Port part of the name is definitely the prominent feature of the town. It was filled with motels, quick-bite restaurants and a developed Oceanside block of seafood restaurants and tourist shops. As it is the major



place to catch a ferry to Victoria, BC, people tend to not spend a lot of time there.

There are two main streets: first and third (both one way, so you go up one and down the other). And the town is probably a mile or two in length with the actual downtown area being about three square blocks. This part of town was very pleasant. Classic architecture, unique shops, a wine store, nice cafes, and a few restaurants that were definitely a step up from Tom's Roadhouse grill or the general McDonald's. I snapped my pictures of the waterfront and meandered the downtown's few streets. There was a well stocked bookshop with both new and used books, artsy greeting cards and bacon vs. tofu action figures so I had a good time in there. I did find Bella Italia, the restaurant Bella and Edward went to after he saved her from the ruffian attackers of Port Angeles. Sadly, there was no mushroom ravioli on the menu though. And lastly, before I returned to my motel on the edge of town I was lucky enough to have the clouds break up a bit over the mountains and catch a few glimpses of snowy peaks and craggy cliffs.

The towns were fairly close to what I was picturing if not a little more run down than I had expected; and I'm sure the movie will 'clean them up' a little bit, but I rather enjoyed seeing the true places. I think their rough exterior made it easier to see the more pleasant aspects of the towns, like the close community, the attention to public spaces, the improved efforts to promote the towns (all three had extensive construction occurring and enthusiastic and well-stocked tourism offices), and the rough aspects only added to my understanding of Bella's feelings in Forks. I was able to glimpse the starkness, the limitations and the isolation but also see how that could enable her to flourish as herself, and certainly why it made a safe haven for the Cullens.

It'll be interesting to see how the film shows other aspects of the town, and I'm really curious as to how Stephenie Meyer chose Forks as she's from Phoenix. I suppose its as good a place as any when you're looking for a small town, overcast skies, and a location that is completely isolated from the majority of society! All in all, it was a great pilgrimage; it's given me a new depth to my research and has made it a more personal experience and not just an educational exercise!

Keep checking in... I hope I can complete some more pilgrimages and experiences in my other works too -New Zealand for the Hobbit? Why not!?! Certainly Oxford for His Dark Materials and London and Scotland for Harry Potter... we'll see what happens with on-set exposure too... fingers crossed!

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