



My name is Miki Krok and I am a fourth-year BA Modern Languages student, studying French, Italian and Japanese. I wrote this story inspired by my experience during my Year Abroad, when I went to study in Paris; at the start, I did not know anyone at the same university and this made the start a challenge, especially with regards to settling in. However, once I made friends and got to know other people, the experience was more rewarding and far more pleasant, and the initial difficulties disappeared. The Year Abroad is an experience which throws challenges and surprises, just like the surprise faced by the story character.

7. Where it all began (KS3-5)

Miki Krok

- Direction Pont de Levallois, next train in a minute.

It must have been the fourth time I heard this message during the fifteen minutes I was sitting on the platform of an unfamiliar metro station.

It was the day I had to go to my university in Paris to start three months of study in France, and from the beginning nothing seemed to go right. First of all, it was raining cats and dogs, and I was already soaked to the skin; I got lost in the city, and then I discovered that here they didn't use the word 'crowded' to describe a train, because you could always find a little more space in the carriage. I felt I was afraid of everything.

FRENCH

The metro arrived and I finally managed to get on, but I was followed by a huge crowd. Suddenly I found myself pressed against one of the doors. An inexpressible feeling. I had my rucksack between my feet, and I was staring at it the whole way so that no one would steal it.

Fortunately, the journey did not last long, and I soon arrived at the station next to the college.

The ancient building was elegant, but even though I liked it, I couldn't help thinking that it was like a labyrinth. All the corridors and rooms were the same; I didn't know quite where to go and as time went by I became even more scared. I knew that this was due to the newness of the situation, that it is normal when you are in an unfamiliar place, especially in a new country. But I couldn't get rid of this feeling.

But finally I managed to get my student card and my timetable. The first class was about to start, so I went to the lecture hall, where I found a little corner to wait for the class.

And suddenly I saw her.

She was standing by the door, chatting with two friends. Her blonde hair was perfectly slicked back, her smile was one of the most radiant I've ever seen in my life. She was wearing a cute dark blue jumper, a backpack, smart jeans and white designer trainers.

But I didn't know her. In fact, not knowing anyone, I waited for the class alone. I started looking at my phone.

FRENCH

After a few minutes, the professor arrived and entered the lecture hall; all the students followed him, and I guessed I had to do the same. It was a large room, with many seats, divided into many rows. I sat in the last row, took out my laptop, and naively thought I would be the only one there.

But suddenly someone sat down next to me. It was her, the girl I had seen outside the room. This time, however, she was alone.

- Hello - she said, still smiling.

And I didn't know what to do.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version) (adapted)

QUESTIONS:

- 1) At the start of the story, where is the main character?
- 2) Give an account of a moment in your life when you felt lost. Try to describe, in as vivid a way as possible, your impressions of the place you found yourself in.
- 3) The narrator gives a detailed description of the girl he can see. Write a detailed description of the narrator.
- 4) Write an account of what you think might happen next in the story.