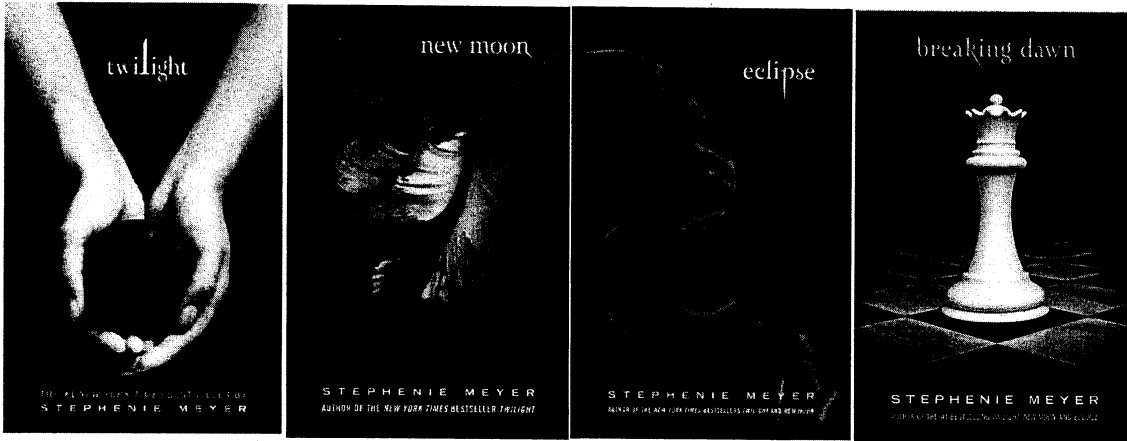


# *The Twilight Saga*



*"About three things I was absolutely positive.*

*First, Edward was a vampire.*

*Second, there was a part of him- and I didn't know how dominant that part might be- that thirsted for my blood.*

*And third, I was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with him."*

*~ Twilight, page 195*

**T**he story of *The Twilight Saga* centres around the relationship between the teenager Isabella “Bella” Swan, and her relationship Edward Cullen, who just happens to be a breathtakingly handsome vampire. However, he isn’t your stereotypical vampire, sleeping in a coffin or transforming into a bat. He, and his family of six other vampires, made the choice to go against their nature and feed on the blood of animals, rather than humans. They lead a fairly normal existence, despite never aging or sleeping, and must avoid sunlight - not because they will die if they encounter it – but because it makes their skin sparkle like

diamonds. If humans were to see this, their vampirism would be revealed and the ramifications would be disastrous.

If you haven't read the series, this is a brief synopsis without trying to give too much away. The first novel, *Twilight*, deals with Bella's initial attraction to Edward, her discovery of his secret and the blossoming of their intense love. The second novel, *New Moon*, has Bella dealing severe depression after Edward leaves her (believing that his presence can only bring harm upon her). As she bonds with Jacob Black, her childhood friend, Bella comes back to life...and finds out that Jacob is a werewolf. The third book, *Eclipse*, has Bella and Edward reunited.

Only now things are a bit different. Bella is caught in the middle between Edward the vampire, and Jacob the werewolf. To make things more complicated, werewolves and vampires happen to be mortal enemies, and Jacob and Edward are vying for Bella's heart. The last book in the series, *Breaking Dawn*, begins with the marriage of Bella and Edward, and finally has Bella getting what she wished for – immortality. However, she gets a bit more than she bargained for...

The above synopsis is admittedly a very simplified version of over 2,000 pages of story which is spread over the four novels. They also deal with themes such as abstinence, good versus evil, the value of life, and the importance of making solid choices.

#### *Twilight* Facts...

- Over 42 million copies have been sold worldwide
- It has been translated into 37 languages
- The first book was published in 2005, the last in 2008
- The idea for the books came to Meyer in a dream
- The movie version of *Twilight* has grossed almost \$400 million worldwide
- The second and third novels will also be made into movies, although it is not clear if the fourth book will be filmed

# Stephenie Meyer



Before *Twilight*, Meyer was a twenty-something stay-at-home mom to her young sons in Phoenix, Arizona. She had graduated with a degree in English from Brigham Young University, but had not pursued writing any further (Meyer, n.d.). However, all that changed when the concept for *Twilight* came to Meyer in a dream one night in June, 2003.

The story goes that she dreamt of a young woman and man laying in a meadow, his skin sparkling in the sunlight. They were in love, but he was a vampire that thirsted for the young woman's blood (Telegraph.co.uk, 2008). This eventually became the famous "meadow scene" in *Twilight*, where the frequently quoted dialogue, "And so the lion fell in love with the lamb...." appears (*Twilight*, pg. 274).

That dream has turned into an amazing success story for Meyer, who went from hoping to get a publishing deal for \$10,000 to pay off her mini-van, to being a millionaire many times over due to the popularity of her books (Valby, n.d.). Aside from *Twilight*, she has written another novel, *The Host*, which was published in 2008. Geared towards a more adult audience, this sci-fi novel has been well-received, but has not been able to garner the attention that *Twilight* has.

## What's in a name?

Can't find anything by or about **Stephenie Meyer**? Check your spelling. Her name often misspelled, even by the press, as:

- Stephanie Meyer
- Stephanie Meyers
- Stephenie Meyers
- Stephanie Mayer
- Stephanie Myers
- Stephenie Myer

*Sources:*

Meyer, S. (n.d.). *Official bio*. Retrieved from <http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/bio.html>

Telegraph.co.uk. (2008, December 3). Stephenie Meyer: the million-dollar vampire mom.

Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/3531403/Profile---Stephanie-Meyer-the-million-dollar-vampire-mom.html>

Valby, K. (n.d.) Stephenie Meyer: inside the 'Twilight' saga. *Entertainment Weekly*. Retrieved from

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## Amusing Quotes from the Series:

“Stupid, shiny Volvo owner”

– Bella, *Twilight*, p. 83

“Well, I’m nearly a hundred and ten. It’s time I settled down.”

– Edward, *New Moon*, pg. 530

“Did you seriously just stamp your foot? I thought girls only did that on TV.”

– Jacob, *Eclipse*, p. 119

“Sometimes it was so easy to forget that I was kissing a vampire.”

– Bella, *Breaking Dawn*, pg. 23

# The Pros and Cons of *Twilight*



It seems that the series evokes extremely strong feelings. Either people intensely love it, or they loathe it. So what are some of the arguments for each side of the debate?

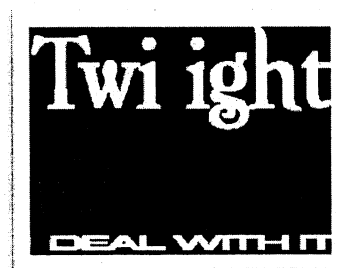
## Pros...

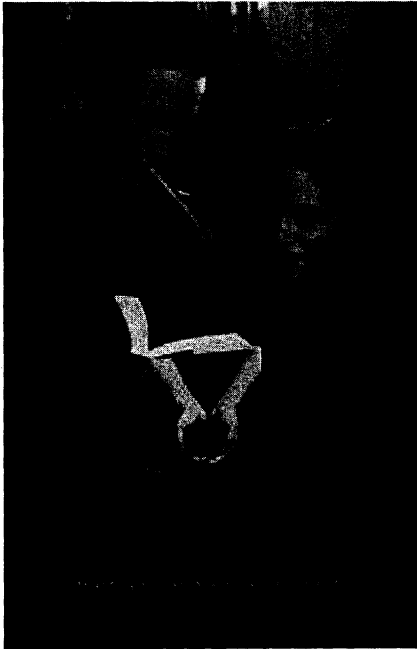
- ❖ They're quick, easy reads suitable for reluctant readers
- ❖ Promotes abstinence/against premarital sex
- ❖ Bella is seen as a strong character, but an average girl
- ❖ Emphasizes the importance of making good choices
- ❖ Good defeats evil
- ❖ Positive role-models for Aboriginal peoples
- ❖ Vampires are not stereotypical
- ❖ The story is about unconditional love
- ❖ Reinforces strong family values
- ❖ Has filled the void left by Harry Potter
- ❖ Reaches an audience beyond young adults



## Cons...

- ❖ The writing quality is poor
- ❖ Bella repeatedly tries, unsuccessfully, to seduce Edward
- ❖ Bella is seen as weak and whiney
- ❖ There is too much emphasis on physical appearances, namely Edward's
- ❖ Some of Edward's characteristics can be viewed as "creepy" and "stalkerish" i.e. watching Bella sleep at night without her being aware
- ❖ Dislike of the portrayal of vampires
- ❖ Backlash due to the fact that Meyer is a Latter-Day Saint (Mormon)
- ❖ Too much publicity
- ❖ Backlash at the intensity of the fans





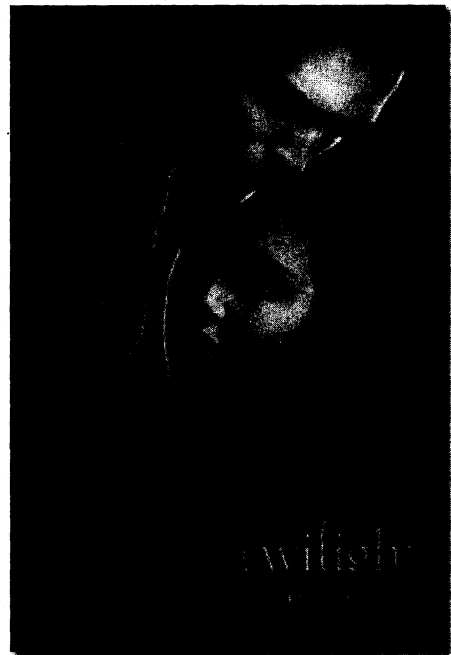
Regardless as to which side of the debate you fall under, the popularity of the books cannot be denied. Many of those who love the books have likened the effect of reading them to being addictive, like a drug. They just can't put them down, and it's difficult to explain exactly why. And while the books may not be prized literature, they have helped to promote reading to new audiences, perpetuate the value of reading to existing audiences, created a renaissance of vampire literature, increased library circulation and bookstore sales.

## Movie Adaptations

On November 21, 2008 the movie version of *Twilight* was released in North America to mixed reviews. Anticipation had been building for months, and the stars, Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart, embarked on a massive publicity tour prior to its release.

All the talk of the movie on TV and the Internet made the books both more popular among the curious, and more hated among the uninterested. For many, the movie build-up led to their first exposure to the books. Some saw the movie without having read the series, then went on to read the books. Simply put, the movie catapulted the love story of Bella and Edward into a media frenzy.

Was the movie any good? It depends on who you ask. It's risky to take such beloved characters and try to translate





them to the big screen. Just as with the books, the movie is either intensely loved or intensely hated. Debates surround the casting choices, alterations to the story, disappointment with what was or was not included, and upset has expressed about the low-budget nature of the special effects and wardrobe.

The movie clearly *tries* to stay true to the story, and it's only natural that changes have to be made to suit the medium. Stephenie Meyer had input in the film, conferring often with Catherine Hardwicke, the director, and Melissa Rosenberg, the screenwriter.

Opening weekend saw the movie gross almost \$70 million dollars, with opening night parties being held across North America. Though the movie didn't please everyone, it pleased enough people to stay in the theatres for 19 weeks (<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/>).

The profit was solid enough to start work on turning the second and third novels into movies, with *New Moon's* projected release date being November 2009, and *Eclipse* in the summer of 2010. So far, the entire cast has agreed to stay on board, and filming will be done consecutively, as none of the Cullens can appear to have aged.

Hardwicke, however, is not returning as director, stating that she did not feel that she could do the story justice in such a short amount of preparation time, with filming to begin taking place only four months after *Twilight's* release. In her place is Chris Weitz, best known for directing *American Pie* series.



Changes are allegedly being made to reflect fan input, such changes in make-up and wardrobe. However, the biggest curiosity is to see what happens with Edward in the movie. The majority of the popularity and success is due to the attractiveness and likeability of Robert Pattinson, who portrays Edward. However,

Edward is barely in the second book, appearing at the beginning and the end, and as a disembodied voice of Bella's hallucinations. So, it will be interesting to see if movie will stay true to the book, or if extra scenes with Edward are added, potentially lessening the impact of his return in the end. As one would expect, fans are clearly divided on which is better. In the meantime, we'll have to wait and see!



"You're impossibly fast. And strong. Your skin is... pale white, and ice cold. Your eyes change colour, and sometimes you speak like you're from a different time. You never eat or drink anything. You don't go into the sunlight... How old are you?"

*"Seventeen."*

"How long have you been seventeen?"

*"...a while."*

"I know what you are."

*"Say it, out loud. Say it."*

"Vampire."

*"Are you afraid?"*

"No."

- *Twilight*, the movie

