

the Source Book Talk

by Hannah Miller, DCE

Twilight by Stephenie Meyer

About:

Twilight, published in 2005, is the first of a four-book Young Adult series. Written by Stephenie Meyer, the book tells a Romeo and Juliet-esque love story between a teenage girl, Bella, and a Vampire, Edward. The book has spent several weeks/months on the New York Times best-seller list, as well as received many other praises. *Twilight* has also recently been made into a major motion picture that will be available on DVD in March.

Meyer, a mother of three and member of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said the idea for the book came to her in a dream, “In my dream, two people were having an intense conversation in a meadow in the woods. One of these people was just your average girl. The other person was fantastically beautiful, sparkly, and a vampire. They were discussing the difficulties inherent in the facts that A) they were falling in love with each other while B) the vampire was particularly attracted to the scent of her blood, and was having a difficult time restraining himself from killing her immediately.”

(www.stepheniemeyer.com)

Length: 498 Pages

Location: Mostly Forks, WA, and surrounding area, but some time spent in Phoenix, AZ

Recommended Reading Age: 13-14 years old and up (due to some graphic violence and some mature content)

Characters:

The Humans:

Isabella “Bella” Swan: 17 years old. The main female character of the story. Perceptive to the needs of others, introverted, awkward, curious, self-described as “average-looking.” Daughter of divorced parents, Charlie and Renee.

Charlie Swan: Father of Bella and Police Chief of Forks, WA. Quiet, loves to fish and watch sports.

Renee: Bella’s mother. Flighty and a worrywart. Married to Phil. Lives in Florida.

Angela, Mike, Lauren, Jessica, Tyler, and Eric: Students at Forks High School and friends of Bella’s.

The Quileute Tribe:

*Note: While the Quileute Native American Tribe plays a very minor role in *Twilight*, they are a much more prominent part of the series. All the members of the Quileute tribe live on a reservation near La Push, WA.

Jacob Black: 16 years old. An old friend of Bella’s.

Billy Black: Father of Jacob and best friend of Charlie Swan.

The Cullen Vampires:

*Note: All the vampires in the books are characterized by having ice cold and very pale skin. They also possess incredible beauty, strength, intelligence, and skill. The Cullen family consider themselves, “vegetarians” and don’t drink human blood. Because of this, their eyes range from black to amber colored depending on thirst. Vampires who aren’t vegetarians have eyes that are bright crimson/red. Meyer’s vampires don’t need sleep and can handle being in the sun; however, their skin “sparkles,” so they avoid being out when around humans

Edward Cullen: Eternally 17 years old. Main male character of the story. Handsome, sensitive, emotional, lonely, protective. Edward can read the minds of everyone around him, except for Bella’s.

Carlisle Cullen: “Father” of the Cullen vampire coven. Doctor at the hospital in Forks. Kind. Sensitive to needs of all living creatures.

Esme Cullen: “Mother” of the Cullen coven. Known for her compassion.

Alice Cullen: Married to Jasper. Alice is trendy, petite, spunky, stubborn. She can also tell future events of humans and vampires.

Jasper Hale: Married to Alice. Jasper is laid back. He has the ability to control the emotions of those in the room.

Rosalie Hale: Married to Emmett. Protective of the Cullen family.

Emmett Cullen: Married to Rosalie. Very strong, cheerful.

The Traveling Vampires (the non-vegetarians):

James: a skilled tracker.

Victoria: James’ partner.

Laurent: the third member of James’ coven.

Story Summary:

As the story opens, we learn that Bella, a junior in high school, and daughter of divorced parents, has moved from Phoenix where she lived with her mother to Forks, WA, to live with her father, Charlie. Bella’s mother, Renee, has recently remarried to a baseball player named Phil. Bella has chosen to move to Forks to make things easier for her mother.

During her first day at a new school, Bella is introduced to the Cullen family. The story is that Dr. Carlisle and Esme Cullen adopted 5 teenagers and moved to Forks, WA, shortly after. Beyond that, not much is known about the Cullen family. After a shaky start, a tentative friendship is formed between Edward and Bella. However, the story that is supplied about Edward wears thin to her and on a trip to the beach she hears the Quileute legends about the Cullens, or “the cold ones,” as they are described by Jacob Black. According to the legends, the “cold ones” signed a treaty with the Quileutes that they would never cross the reservation boundary, nor bite or kill a human, or the Quileutes, some taking forms of wolves, could attack.

During a misadventure with friends in the nearby town of Port Angeles, where Bella is rescued by Edward, she demands answers and the truth comes out. Edward is a 100+ year old vampire who is intensely attracted to the scent of Bella’s blood. Because of this, it makes it very dangerous for her to be around him. It is also revealed at this time that Edward can read minds, except for Bella’s. Edward makes it very clear that it is dangerous for Bella to be around him, but Bella insists that she can handle it. A dating relationship blossoms between Edward and Bella.

Bella is soon introduced to the Cullen family and she is invited to a friendly game of “Baseball.” During this time, traveling vampires, James, Laurent and Victoria enter the story. James, a gifted tracker/hunter, catches Bella’s scent. Edward, who is able to see his thoughts, knows that James will not rest until he drinks Bella’s blood. The Cullen family goes on high alert and Bella is whisked away to Phoenix in hopes of losing his scent.

While hiding out in Phoenix, the tracker lures Bella away from her guard (Alice and Jasper) by saying that he has taken her mother. Bella goes to save her mother, only to find out it is a lie. At the time when it looks dire, Edward, Emmett and Carlisle rescue Bella from James.

Things to Discuss:

Leader's Note: These questions are meant to be open-ended as a way to guide discussion and to provide a context for conversation. There are Scripture references that can be used to help guide the conversation.

Bella's story begins with a preface, "I'd never given much thought to how I would die...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..." Is it ok for someone to give their life up as a sacrifice for someone else? What circumstances make that acceptable? (*Reference 1 John 3:16*)

During the story, Edward repeatedly tells Bella that he is dangerous for her to be around, yet tells her she is brave for doing so. Is this an example of a healthy relationship? Is it ever acceptable to be in a dating relationship that is considered dangerous, even if the person wants to change?

Edward feels that he is not a hero, but that he is a villain. What makes a hero? What makes a villain? Is Bella heroic or foolish for trying to save her mother? Is Edward most heroic in the traditional roles--saving her life numerous times or in non-traditional roles-- trying to stay away from her?

The Cullen's say that the bond of their family is stronger because they abstain from drinking human blood. How is their family relationship different from that of James' coven? How is the Cullen family relationship stronger or weaker than the other families (Bella and Charlie; Bella, Renee, and Phil; Jacob and Billy Black) in the story?

In the beginning of the story, friendships play a very important role to Bella. How does that change throughout the story?

During *Twilight*, it becomes apparent that the Cullen's have constructed a world based on half-truths and lies. They say that it is not only to protect themselves, but the humans with whom they interact. At the end of the story, Bella and Edward tell Charlie and Renee several lies in order to protect them from the truth. Is it ever acceptable to tell a lie? In what circumstances? (*Reference Colossians 3:5-17*)

Bella is very servant-minded. What are some things that she does throughout the story that illustrate this? Would you consider this a strength or a weakness?

The Quileutes insist that even "vegetarian" vamps are still dangerous and need to be protected against. The Cullens spend their lives trying to redeem their evil nature. Are the Cullens evil because they are vampires or do their actions redeem their nature? Are all humans sinful? Can our actions redeem our sinful nature? (*Reference Romans 3:21-31*)