

# A NEW DAWN

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*Your Favorite Authors on  
Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Series*

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Edited by Ellen Hopkins  
with Leah Wilson

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# INTRODUCTION

## To Twilight or Not to Twilight

**Ellen Hopkins**

**T**read carefully, dear readers. There's a new vampire in town, and Edward Cullen is so not your mother's vampire. Okay, he does have a few things in common with more classic bloodsuckers like Anne Rice's Lestat. He's cultured. Insanely alluring. Downright dazzlingly sexy. Drop-dead gorgeous, in fact. (Sorry, couldn't help the double entendre, and you'll find more in this book. Authors just love stuff like that.) But what makes Edward so damn addictive is not his undeadness. It's his abiding humanity.

Okay, confession. I was at first dumbfounded by the success of *Twilight* and its sequels, *Eclipse* and *New Moon*. Oh, I've always understood the lure of the vampire. For many years I was, in fact, a dedicated horror reader. Stephen King and Dean Koontz were always at the top of my reading lists, along with classic authors like Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker, and Mary Shelley. When Ms. Rice came along, I devoured her books, much like her characters devoured their unsuspecting victims. If I could have faulted Rice's books, it would have been for their heavy descriptiveness, which at times overpowered the action. I preferred the pacing of King, whose

storytelling fascinated me on an instinctual level that I didn't understand until I became a writer.

You see, as writers, we often analyze the works we loved to read. What drew us to them? Why did they work for us? What kept us turning the pages? When I went back to consider why I loved Stephen King's books, it came down to one central thing. Character. Yes, he writes high-concept plots, but they evolve from character, something I strive to do with my own books. King is the master of character. He takes ordinary people and puts them into horrific situations. How they deal with them has everything to do with who they are as humans. King taps into the heart of us all—our shared humanity.

But what of this Stephenie Meyer phenomenon? She says she first pitched *Twilight* as a “suspense romance horror comedy.” What, exactly, is *that*? And why would *anyone* want to read it? I didn't think I did, and I resisted for a very long time. I never read books just because everyone else is reading them. Why start with this one? A first novel, five hundred pages, inspired by a dream and written in three months? To *Twilight* or not to *Twilight*? Definitely not.

And then I started to notice an interesting fact. Her readership and mine overlap. How could that be? I don't write horror (despite the fact that I once thought I'd be the next Stephen King). Nor do I write suspense, comedy, or romance. I write edgy contemporary fiction. I write about drugs. Suicide. Abuse. And not the kind of abuse that results from some undead being chomping into my protagonists. What could our books possibly have in common?

The only way to find out, of course, was to read them. And when I was asked to contribute to this anthology, it gave me the perfect excuse to do what I swore never to do—read Stephenie Meyer. I picked up *Twilight* with some trepidation. I had heard a lot about the book—both good and bad. I suppose all books have fans and whatever the opposite of “fans” is. (“People who don't like them” is awfully unwieldy. Antonym for “fan,” anyone?)

I have now read all three. Because I'm a writer, I likely read with a different eye than someone reading strictly for pleasure, and my opinion is surely colored by my own ideas about good writing and what makes a compelling read. Not to mention what makes characters interesting. Meyer, an English lit major, has said her favorite author is Jane Austen, and there is an evident Austen flavor in Meyer's writing. Her storytelling flows like a slow, steady stream, its bank lush with adverbs and adjectives. Closer to Rice than King, and definitely nothing like my own spare style, which is more a hailstorm, eroding modifiers from the page. Nope. No crossover appeal there.

Well then, how about our heroines? Meyer's Bella is flawed, and certainly, so are my female protagonists. Not a solid one in the bunch, and like Bella, all make poor decisions along their journeys. But Meyer, who has called her teen self a "regular good girl," writes her Bella as a regular good girl, too. When wronged or hurt, she tends to flee, or to withdraw into some inner sanctum where others can't touch her. I prefer to write about "irregular troubled girls." Though all of them are decent at their cores, when forced to react, they are much more likely to exact revenge than to suffer in silence. If Meyer's readers love Bella, how then can they be drawn to the young women in my books? Hmm. Quite the conundrum.

That brings us to our leading men. Meyer's readers seem to have formed two fan clubs: the Everything Edwards and the Just Jacobs. From the start, Jacob is clearly the underdog (underwolf?), but his "pack" loves him every bit as much as the other camp adores Edward. Both characters might be categorized as "beautiful bad boys with big hearts." I've definitely got a couple of those in my books. But I've also got beautiful good boys, and bad boys with miniscule hearts. So no, our heroes, if you can call them that, don't have all that much in common. What then, is the collective draw?

As I read the essays in this book, certain words and phrases kept popping up. Love. Romance. Unrequited romance. Longing. The

search for belonging. Seduction. Obsession. Connection. Lack of connection. Love. Forgiveness. Passion. Fear. Fear of growing old. Love. Finally, something clicked. My books have all those elements, too. And those things go straight to the heart of us, as people. Meyer's books and my books do have something very basic in common. They speak, as Jane Austen's and Stephen King's books do, to our shared humanity.

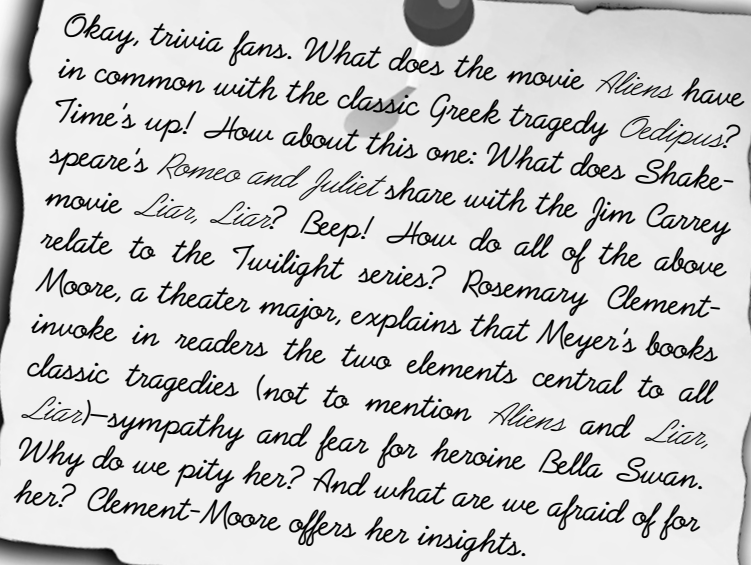
If you ask someone what *Twilight* is about, chances are, they'll say "vampires." *New Moon*? Werewolves, of course. But if you take a good, hard look at Edward and Jacob, both are more human than monster. They long. Fear. Obsess. Seek connection. Most of all, they love, and their all-encompassing love for Bella is the kind of love every human being instinctively seeks. Stephenie Meyer's books are not about monsters. They are about people finding forever love, something that resonates not only with her readers and my readers, but all readers. For by opening those stunning book covers, we become immersed in Edward and Jacob's love for Bella and we absorb it, page by page.

And who doesn't need a little more love?

# Romeo, Ripley, and Bella Swan

*Fate and the Classic Hero in the Twilight  
Universe*

**Rosemary Clement-Moore**



Okay, trivia fans. What does the movie *Aliens* have in common with the classic Greek tragedy *Oedipus*? Time's up! How about this one: What does Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* share with the Jim Carrey movie *Liar, Liar*? Beep! How do all of the above relate to the *Twilight* series? Rosemary Clement-Moore, a theater major, explains that Meyer's books invoke in readers the two elements central to all classic tragedies (not to mention *Aliens* and *Liar, Liar*)—sympathy and fear for heroine Bella Swan. Why do we pity her? And what are we afraid of for her? Clement-Moore offers her insights.

This is hard for a literature geek—not to mention a theater major—to admit, but here it goes: *Romeo and Juliet* nearly killed

my GPA freshman year. I just didn't get it. I feel vaguely heretical admitting that. The play contains some of the most beautiful (and quotable) language ever written, but it took me a long time to understand why it's a classic.

What does this have to do with Stephenie Meyer's lushly engrossing, gothic tale of Bella Swan and her vampire lover? When I first read *Twilight*, I remember thinking that it was a little like *Romeo and Juliet*, except one of them is already dead. Then I opened *New Moon*, and the first thing I saw was a quote from Shakespeare. Within the first chapter, Bella and Edward are discussing the similarities (sort of) between their relationship and Shakespeare's famous tragedy. It's nice to know, as a reader, that you're not just imagining things.

Meyer uses these parallels to good advantage. Most of the time, when you read a novel as romantic as *Twilight* and its sequels, you expect everything to work out in the end. One of the strengths of Bella's story, at least for me, is that it never loses the sense of jeopardy. Meyer doesn't shy away from hurting her main characters. The happy ending does not feel like a forgone conclusion. The allusions to *Romeo and Juliet* are a reminder that love does *not* conquer all. In fact, sometimes it can really screw things up.

But the series has more in common with classic tragedies than the danger of ending up with a stage full of dead bodies before the curtain comes down. Bella's story—her romance with Edward, her position between the werewolves and the vampires, her complicated relationship with Jacob—harkens back to the classic hero, fate, and the idea of a destiny determined by a trait so intrinsic to the hero that it cannot be changed, no matter what the consequences.

In other words, it's not any plot similarity that makes Bella's story feel like a classic tragedy, but rather that the elements that go into it are the same elements that have, for thousands of years, resonated with audiences. To examine this, we have to go way back, past Shakespeare, to about 300 B.C.E., when a Greek philosopher named

Aristotle came up with theories about literature that still affect how we think about art, even in the twenty-first century. (I *did* warn you I was a theater geek. But stick with me, folks.)

In Aristotle's day, if you wanted a good story, you couldn't just run down to the Borders at the corner of Athens and Sparta and buy a novel. People went to the theater. You might think a play in Ancient Greece wouldn't have much in common with the high-tech spectacles on Broadway now, but really only the technology has changed. People went to the theater then for the same reason we go the movies or read a book now: to laugh or cry, to be horrified or amazed, to be entertained or informed.

There were comedies and epics, and there were tragedies. The tragedies are the ones we usually have to study in high school: *Oedipus* and *Antigone* and all their multitudinous family problems. The curriculum guides don't drag these out just to depress senior English students (as convincing as that theory might seem). The lasting impact of the literature has to do with the intent of the tragedy versus the comedy.

Classic comedies illuminate the human condition by drawing broadly exaggerated examples of the worst traits of mankind. I am going to lose my Thespian Society secret decoder ring for making this comparison, but—think of Jim Carrey in *Liar, Liar*. He plays a habitual liar who is “cursed” so that he can only speak the truth. The character starts at one extreme—Carrey plays a slick and insincere lawyer who lies to his own son—and ends up at the other—he is compelled to blurt out the truth about even trivial things, like who farted in the elevator.

The ridiculous problems that result from Carrey's exaggerated honesty point out how much we, as a culture, lie—white lies, lies by omission. Classic comedies are intended to comment on human society as a whole. Tragedies, however, should connect with the spectator on a more personal level.

The goal of the classic tragedy was to evoke emotions of pity and fear in the audience, to make them feel as if they were living the story themselves. By experiencing these emotions through the action on stage (or on the page, once mass-market publishing came along), we learn about our place in the universe.

We feel pity for the classic hero, because even though his own actions lead to his fate, he generally doesn't deserve what he gets (hence the word "tragic"). The hero learns through his suffering, and because we sympathize with him, we learn, too. For example, Gloucester in *King Lear* loses his eyes because he did not see his sons' treachery until too late. It makes us realize the value of being able to see, both literally, and figuratively, what is going on around us.

Since I've already confessed that I have some *history* with *Romeo and Juliet*, I'm going to use another great classic as an example. In this case, a movie: James Cameron's *Aliens*.

(You don't think Aristotle would approve? I said I was a literature geek, not a literature snob.)

In *Aliens*, our hero is Ripley, last surviving crewmember of the *Nostromo*, a spaceship where everyone gets massacred by an eight-foot-tall, armor-plated, acid-dripping alien monster. She escapes and puts herself in suspended animation for the long trip back to Earth, and when she gets there, fifty-seven years have passed. Her daughter has grown up and died. The world has changed and she's alone in it. She loses her pilot's license, gets a lousy job, and is so plagued by horrible nightmares that when some yutz wants her to return to the planet where the thing came from, that's actually her best option.

Unlike Jim Carrey's character in *Liar Liar*, Ripley didn't do anything to deserve this. When she and a team of space marines reach the alien planet, she is forced, again, to face the monsters that killed her old crew and left her alone in the universe. She befriends Newt, a stranded little girl (because every alien-infested planet needs a precocious orphan girl), which leads her into even worse trouble,

because when the acid hits the fan, she cannot leave her comrades, especially Newt, to die horrible deaths at the hands—claws—of the aliens.

So let's talk about Bella Swan. On the surface, she seems pretty much on top of things. She makes decent grades, takes care of her dad Charlie, cooks dinner every night. Though she made the decision to move to Forks, she seems to view it as the lesser of two miseries: living in a strange, sunless place with Charlie, or living with her mother, Renée, who just remarried, and preventing her from following her new baseball player husband on the road. The latter isn't a viable alternative for Bella; there is only one choice that she can make, and it carries her to her destiny.

In Forks she meets Edward, and things spiral out of her control. He calls her a "magnet for trouble" and that certainly seems to be true. Within the first fourth of *Twilight*, she's nearly squashed by Taylor's van, faints in class, and runs into a gang of thugs on a trip to Port Angeles. Not to mention how she's always tripping and falling. (Could her clumsiness be a metaphor for what she really is: not just a klutz, but a classic hero, blown around by the whim of fate? Or is her clumsiness a reversal of the Greek dramatic concept of *deus ex machina*? Instead of the gods appearing at the end of the play to fix the character's problems, are the Fates constantly "tripping" Bella up to cause problems, and keep her on her destined path?)

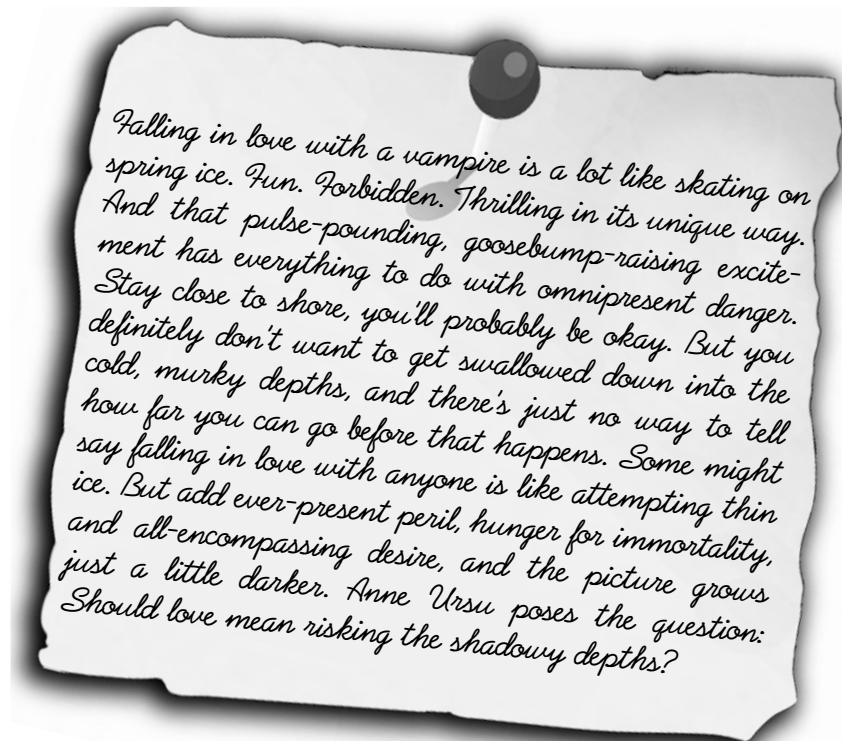
Later in the book, things get truly dire when Bella attracts the attention of the killer vampire James. Not just any carnivorous vamp, but one with an obsession for hunting. He's like the Terminator: once he's got her scent, he will never stop. Not only is her life in danger, but Renée's and Charlie's as well. It looks, for a while, like we could be headed for that tragic stage full of dead bodies.

And what has she done to deserve this? Nothing but fall in love with Edward. You could argue that wasn't wise—Jacob fans certainly would—but you can't say that she did anything wrong.

# My Boyfriend Sparkles

Or, First Love at Twilight

**Anne Ursu**



Each night I ask the stars above  
Why must I be a teenager in love?

—DION AND THE BELMONTS

**B**ella Swan thinks of her relationship with the vampire Edward Cullen in great sweeping terms—Romeo and Juliet, Catherine and Heathcliff. And their story certainly has echoes of those iconic lovers; they are star-crossed, ardent, destined for each other, eternal, doomed. But as extraordinary as their relationship is, it is also quite ordinary, and familiar. The overwhelming intensity of their romance makes sense because Bella and Edward are teenagers, and never is the rhetoric of star-crossed love and eternity so plausible as at that time in life. While Edward isn't exactly human, their relationship is very much so, and its course closely follows familiar tropes of teen love, for better or for worse. Bella Swan's relationship with Edward Cullen is immortal, dangerous, forbidden, impassioned, all-consuming—in short, exactly like any first love.

With Bella, Edward says he is breaking all the rules, but in reality, their relationship follows every one of them.

### **I Was Nothing Before I Met Him**

As typical a first relationship as this one is, Stephenie Meyer portrays Bella as a very untypical teenager. Bella is somehow apart from the experience of adolescence—she can't seem to relate to her peers and to her parents she is more caretaker than daughter. And once in Forks, she's a complete alien. When she meets Edward, Bella is totally unmoored and miserable, living in a town she hates with a father she barely knows, having to adjust to a new high school where she can't seem to operate on the same wavelength as the other students, and where gym is a daily requirement. She is the consummate new girl, lonely and awkward, without even a real home to go to at the end of the day. She begins the story utterly lost and ungrounded, in desperate need of something to center her.

Bella's just different. She likes classical music, doesn't have a cell phone, isn't into dances or shopping, drives a beat-up old truck, and when she finally finds a real friend for herself it's a fifteen-year-old

werewolf from the Indian reservation. But all of this difference really just makes Bella an entirely normal teenager—that sense of isolation, of deviation, is an unfortunate rite of adolescence. Meyer has taken this familiar experience and heightened it by throwing Bella into a new, uncomfortable environment, but few teenagers really feel they fit in. And nothing helps alleviate that like falling in love.

### **As Soon As I Saw Him, He Became My Whole World**

Immediately, Edward provides the axis for Bella's emotional orbit. Even though his first response to her is angry and hateful, she can't stop thinking about him, and even when he's absent from school she lives her life in reaction to him—she's depressed, she can't sleep. Her moods become entirely dependant on him and his reaction to her. Edward is a predator, and his allure and hypnotic charm are part of his particular natural predatory attributes, but anyone who has been in love knows what Bella's going through. The experience has actually been formally pathologized by psychiatrists. Swiss researchers at the Psychiatric University Basel actually studied teenagers in love and found that they experienced intense moodiness, sleeplessness, and mania-like behavior. Another group of psychologists found that the brain of a teenager in love is similar to someone on cocaine—in other words, love is like an addiction. As if anybody needed researchers to tell them any of this.

For Edward, too, the immediate attraction is overwhelming—Bella is exactly his type, or at least his blood type. Where Bella is immediately consumed by Edward, Edward immediately wants to consume Bella. For him, Bella is not cocaine, but rather heroin. Their relationship isn't the traditional love at first sight—Bella is too awed and Edward just really wants to eat her, but nonetheless they are entrapped the moment they see each other just as if they were normal teenagers struck by Cupid's arrow.

### He's Not Like the Other Boys

Bella immediately attracts the attention of some of the boys in school, but she has no interest in them—she doesn't even seem to live on the same planet. But, like Bella, Edward is apart from his classmates; the Cullens seem to operate entirely separate from everyone else. Bella immediately identifies them as fellow misfits, and that's certainly part of Edward's appeal.

But Edward isn't just apart from his peers—he is above them. Bella is like the high schooler dating a college guy because high school boys are just *so* immature. He's not just different, he's better, and this makes him both more attractive and more inaccessible to Bella.

From almost the beginning, Bella senses that something is different about Edward. There's his beauty, certainly—which she perceptively describes as “inhuman.” And there's something otherworldly about him—his cold hands, the electricity of his touch, the mutability of his eyes, the fact that he always seems to have eavesdropped on conversations he could not have heard. But even on a human level, he's different than the other boys in school. Mike, Eric, and Tyler are all nice enough, and all very eager for her attention, but like a girl who believes anyone who is interested in her can't possibly be worthy, Bella isn't interested in them. Their very friendliness is what makes them unattractive to her. Edward, though, is cool (quite literally) and reserved. And when he does start acting friendly toward her, he doesn't make the well-meaning but inane small talk of the other boys; he probes into her reasons for being in Forks. Everything about him is different: his antiquated name, his nice clothes, his shiny car, and his taste in music—you get the distinct impression none of the other boys could identify “Clair de Lune,” and Bella never gives them the chance. When the school dance approaches, the other boys all ask her out in turn, while Edward lingers in the background, cool and wry in direct contrast to their overeager sin-

cerity. Tyler, Mike, and Eric want Bella to appear on their arms in this most traditional of high school rites; Edward wants to accompany her on her escape from it. The boys are common; Edward is sophisticated. They like her for being the new girl; Edward likes her for who she is. They are overwhelmed by bio labs and English papers; Edward has done them all before and knows all the answers. They follow Bella around like puppies; Edward remains alluring and remote. While the motivations of the other boys are far too easy to understand, Edward remains mysterious.

He is not like the other boys. “I’m trying to figure out what you are,” she tells him in *Twilight*. A superhero is her first thought, something between Peter Parker and Bruce Wayne. “Edward Cullen was not—human,” she thinks. “He was something more.” She does not say something *else*, something *different*, but something *more*—better, more evolved. Not a boy, but something special.

### **When He Touches Me, It’s Electric**

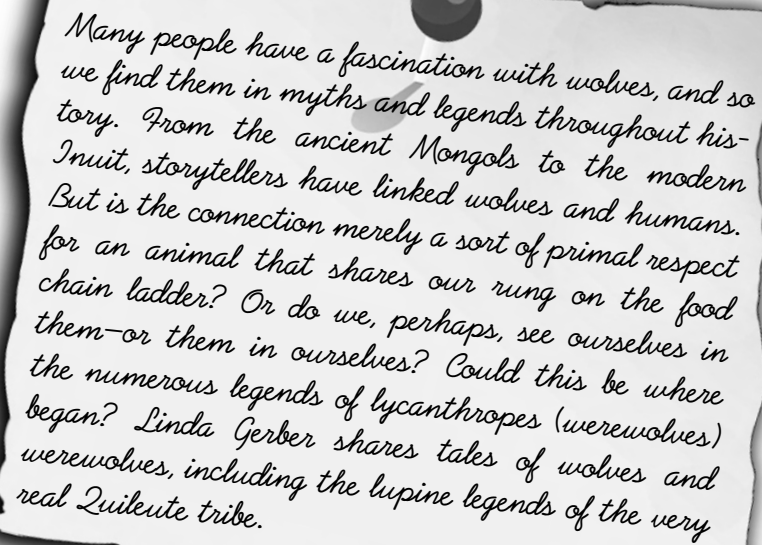
When Edward and Bella brush hands in biology class for the first time, she feels “an electric current” pass between them. That feeling is so common as to be cliché—except traditionally there isn’t a vampire involved in the experience. Meyer is unclear as to whether Bella’s being figurative or literal, but either way the reader knows exactly what Bella means.

Researchers have actually documented the physical effects of love—it increases your adrenaline and institutes a reaction similar to the “fight or flight” response to fear. (In Bella’s case, “fight or flight” is probably a healthy reaction to Edward.) In this relationship, Edward’s effect on Bella physically is so powerful it often seems she won’t survive their interactions. In his presence, Bella frequently forgets to breathe, or her heart stops beating, or she gets dizzy. Once she actually faints. When she sits next to Edward during a movie in biology class as their relationship is developing, his proximity nearly

# Dancing with Wolves

*The Spiritual Journey of Quileute  
Lycanthropes*

**Linda Gerber**



*Many people have a fascination with wolves, and so we find them in myths and legends throughout history. From the ancient Mongols to the modern Inuit, storytellers have linked wolves and humans. But is the connection merely a sort of primal respect for an animal that shares our rung on the food chain ladder? Or do we, perhaps, see ourselves in them—or them in ourselves? Could this be where the numerous legends of lycanthropes (werewolves) began? Linda Gerber shares tales of wolves and werewolves, including the lupine legends of the very real Quileute tribe.*

The wolf's eyes were dark, nearly black. It gazed at me for a fraction of a second, the deep eyes seeming too intelligent for a wild animal.

As it stared at me, I suddenly thought of Jacob. . . .

—NEW MOON

I might as well confess up front—I'm one of *those* people: a diehard Jacob fan. Not that I don't love Edward, mind you, but there's something accessible and familiar about Jacob that Edward, in all his stone-cold beauty, can't touch.

Jacob doesn't have Edward's years of experience or polish. He's naïve, he's rash, and he's delightfully primal. And when we learn the boy is part wolf, he's irresistible.

It's only natural, that attraction; we humans have a certain fascination with *canis lupus* that can't be denied. Look at all the wolves that pop up in our myths and legends throughout the millennia. We can't get enough of them.

As Daniel Wood puts it in his book *Wolves*, these animals are “mirrors, reflecting the proximity of the primitive in human nature.” No wonder we're so fascinated with wolves. We see ourselves in them. Wolves, after all, share many of our same characteristics. They're social, like us. They care for each other and hang out together in communities. They are involved parents, as we would like to believe we are. Wolves share our territory. They are exceptional hunters and are one of the only species besides man who can communicate and work together as a pack. Their howling, as Wood says, is “poetic, even in its bloodthirsty nature.” That music appeals to us. We can relate to wolves on our most primitive level.

This could be why wolves have played such a significant role in history, culture, and spiritual teachings all over the world. Civilizations as diverse as the ancient Mongols (who claim the wolf as their ancestor)<sup>1</sup> to the Romans (whose wolf-god Wepwawet was said to have accompanied the pharaoh on his hunts) believed that wolves held special power.

Wolves even presided over the heavens. Norse myths tell how Sköll chased the sun across the sky and Hati chased the moon. In

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<sup>1</sup> Mongol mythology holds that they descended from a gray wolf and a white doe.

China, the star Sirius—called the Celestial Wolf—stood guard over a great palace in the constellation of Ursa Major.<sup>2</sup>

Wolves in mythology were ultra cool—powerful, intelligent, amazing. Is it any wonder stories emerged to illustrate the intimate relationship between wolf and man? It's that mirror thing, remember? We want to see ourselves reflected in that coolness.

The stories suggest varying degrees of kinship with wolves. A wolf served as protector and guide to the mother of the Chipewan and the Inuit.<sup>3</sup> She-wolves nursed human children in myth and modern literature.<sup>4</sup> Bella Coola<sup>5</sup> and Turkish<sup>6</sup> stories tell of coupling between a human and a wolf.

The coolest stories of all, though, let the human actually *become* a wolf. Legends of lycanthropes are known in almost every part of the world, and not just in fireside tales, either. Werewolf references found their way into such respected works as Plato's *The Republic*

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<sup>2</sup> The red star, Sirius, also known as the Wolf Star, is the brightest star in the northern sky. In China it is called *T'ien-lang*, or Celestial Wolf. Its charge is to guard the celestial palace of Shang-ti, the home of the heroic dead. Native American legends also hold that Sirius is the home of the Ancients. The Milky Way is the wolf's trail—the route into heaven.

<sup>3</sup> A Canadian Dene Tribe myth tells of a wolf that led a mother and her two young children to safety from their enemies. Her two sons grew up to father the Inuit (Eskimo) and Chipewan people respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Roman mythology tells of Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, being nursed by a she-wolf. Recently, archeologists discovered a shrine in a cave where they believe ancient Romans worshiped Lupa, the wolf that suckled them. It is called, logically, the Lupercal shrine. In more modern literature, Rudyard Kipling had the main character of *The Jungle Book*, the boy Mowgli, nursed and raised with wolf cubs.

<sup>5</sup> Bella Coola legends tell of a man who married a wolf in human form. They lived together with their child in the wolf village and eventually the man became a wolf.

<sup>6</sup> Turkish legend tells of a small Mongolian village in northern China attacked by enemy soldiers. All were killed but one baby. A she-wolf named Asena nursed the baby, after which she gave birth to half-wolf, half-human cubs—the ancestors of the Turkish people.

and Pliny's *Natural History*. The Greek historian Herodotus even wrote of a tribe of people—the Neuri—who lived in what is now modern-day Poland and changed into wolves once each year.

Jacob's people also had such stories of man taking on the characteristics of a wolf, and a wolf becoming a man. Stephenie Meyer may have made up the Quileute history of the spirit army and their shape-changing ways in the *Twilight* books,<sup>7</sup> but the actual myths surrounding Native Americans' close relationship with the wolves are legion.

The very origin of the world is tied to the wolf in many tribes, even though they might disagree on detail. Blackfoot legends tell of Old Man, who created the world from a ball of mud and set a wolf free to run across the surface, shaping valleys and plains. According to Cree legend, Wisagatcak the Trickster enlisted the help of Wolf to help create the world from a ball of moss. The Akira of the Great Plains tell a similar story featuring Wolf-man and Lucky-man as creators of the earth. The poor wolf had to go it alone in Piute legend, floating along the primeval waters as he did his creating.

Some Native American myths tell of the creation of the wolves themselves. In the American Southwest, for example, Hitchi legends tell how a shaman made wolves by striking two pinecones together.

The divine nature of the origin of wolves lends extra significance to the legends of the Quileute, who are said to be their descendants. Legend has it that in the wanderings of Kwa'iti—a supernatural

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<sup>7</sup> From Stephenie Meyer's Web site: "The Quileute (*Quill-yoot*) legends Jacob tells Bella in chapter six of *Twilight* are all genuine Quileute stories that I learned when I was researching the tribe (which is a real tribe with a truly fascinating and mystical history). All actual Quileute legends, except for the vampire myth about the 'cold ones.' I latched onto the wolf story (the actual Quileute legend claims that the tribe descended from wolves transformed by a sorcerer) because it fit with my sketchy knowledge of vampires and werewolves always being at each others' throats (ha ha, pun intended)."

transformer, or a “being put on earth to change things and make them better”—he came upon the area known as La Push and transformed two wolves into men—the first members of the Quileute tribe.

Regardless of the particulars, one thing the native stories agreed upon was the sacred nature of the wolf. If wolves mirrored man in general, they mirrored Native American people even more specifically. Their tribe is the pack. Their chief is the alpha. Cooperation and dedication to the group are essential to their survival.

Jacob and his werewolf brothers take it a step further; their spiritual selves are tied to the wolf as well. In the Quileute and other Olympic Peninsula tribes, wolves provide spiritual strength to its warriors and may serve as spirit guides to tribal members. Vision quest stories and rituals such as the crawling-wolf dance prominently feature wolves. In the case of the Quileute boys, they *are* wolves. Accepting, learning, and becoming their true selves represents a spiritual growth of epic proportions.

On a journey toward self-discovery or spiritual awareness, the average person hits his or her first major identity crisis or bump in the road about the same time as puberty. The response is typically rebellion, experimentation, resistance to authority—an increased yearning to “find oneself.” From there, said average individual normally gets to enjoy the self he or she finds for a decade or two before hitting another speed bump. Poor Jacob and brothers are still figuring out life as adolescent boys—a tough enough job in its own right—when they are hit with the mother of all identity crisis: coming to terms with the fact that they are also wolves.

Take Jacob’s transformation into a wolf pack-member, for example. The Jacob of *Twilight* is young, raw, and inexperienced. He knows of his people’s legends, but in his mind they are an abstract. They are part of a mythical history, but have little to do with him. In fact, his tone as he relates the legends to Bella at First Beach is almost dismissive.

“There are lots of legends, some of them dating back to the Flood—supposedly, the ancient Quileutes tied their canoes to the tops of the tallest trees on the mountain to survive, like Noah and the ark . . . Another legend claims that we descended from wolves—and that the wolves are our brothers still. It’s against tribal law to kill them.”

Imagine his surprise in *New Moon* when he finds out the legends are real! His reaction is classic: denial, anger, avoidance—as if he is in mourning. In fact, Jake *is* mourning. The life he knew, the person he was, is gone forever. Dead.

His despair is evident when Bella reaches out to him.

“Jacob, please . . . Won’t you tell me what happened? Maybe I can help.”

“No one can help me now.” The words were a low moan; his voice broke.

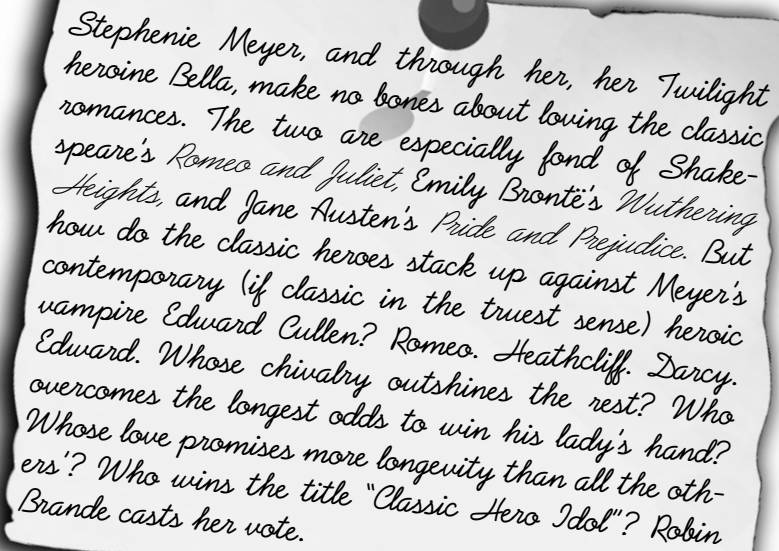
Jake avoids Bella. He fights against what is happening to him, looking at it not as a birthright, but as a cross he is being made to bear.

To be fair, it’s understandable that he would feel blindsided by his first transformation. He had been taught the Quileute legends, but he didn’t realize how literally they pertained to *him*. Jacob was an innocent, and when he “turns,” he is torn away from his old life and thrown into a position where he *has* to learn the secrets of his society.

Coincidentally, actual wolf ritual initiations throughout the Olympic tribes mirror Jake’s experience as an unsuspecting innocent. One ritual in particular, *Thluukwaana*, reenacts the story of Yanamhum, an ancient young hero who was stolen from his home. Wolves taught Yanamhum the secrets of their society and then sent him back to his people to pass on this new knowledge. In the *Thluukwaana* ritual, members of the wolf society (in Jake’s case, those members would be Sam Ulley, Jared, Paul, Embry Call, Seth Clearwater,

# Edward, Heathcliff, and Our Other Secret Boyfriends

**Robin Brande**



*Stephenie Meyer, and through her, her Twilight heroine Bella, make no bones about loving the classic romances. The two are especially fond of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights, and Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. But how do the classic heroes stack up against Meyer's contemporary (if classic in the truest sense) heroic vampire Edward Cullen? Romeo. Heathcliff. Darcy. Edward. Whose chivalry outshines the rest? Who overcomes the longest odds to win his lady's hand? Whose love promises more longevity than all the others'? Who wins the title "Classic Hero Idol"? Robin Brande casts her vote.*

**W**e all have our ideal, swoon-worthy romantic heroes: Aragorn in Lord of the Rings (sigh), Will Turner in Pirates of the Caribbean, Jack Shepherd on *Lost*, Justin Timberlake in "SexyBack"—

whatever. But in her *Twilight* series, Stephenie Meyer has handed us the dreamiest of lovers, so beyond our regular fantasies we're even willing to give up body heat in exchange for sleeping against the cold marble chest of that most perfect of formerly human men, Edward Cullen—giving hope at last to hundreds of men huddled in Antarctica with no sweeties to call their own. (Sorry, guys, but Edward means much more to us than chilly skin. Read on.)

In constructing her ideal mate, and giving him all the qualities a fifteen-year-old (okay, and older) girl needs in a romantic partner, Stephenie Meyer borrows some of the characteristics of other great lovers in literature. She drops hints throughout the series of who those men might be: Heathcliff from *Wuthering Heights*, Romeo from *Romeo and Juliet*, and Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*. But can any of those guys possibly match up to the perfection that is Edward Cullen? Let's see.

### Heathcliff, a.k.a. Scary Psycho Man

I'll admit that when I first read *Twilight*, I made the mistake of thinking it reminded me of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*—you know, the lovers who declare they can't live without each other, the smoldering but unconsummated passion, the windy moors (rainy Forks, whatever)—clearly Bella and Edward are Catherine and Heathcliff, right?

Ugh. So wrong. Have you read *Wuthering Heights* lately? I have. And Heathcliff is—let's be honest here—a total whack job. He's all about revenge and rage and torture. At one point he even strangles a little dog—can you ever imagine Edward Cullen doing that? Sure, he'd rip a grizzly or a mountain lion or a werewolf to shreds, but that's just good (vampire) business.

Yet despite all Heathcliff's obvious flaws, *Wuthering Heights* remains our heroine Bella Swan's favorite book—she rereads it often during the series.

Which drives Edward crazy. He can't understand Bella's fascination with Heathcliff and Cathy, nor can he see why those two have been ranked among the top romantic couples, along with titans like Romeo and Juliet and Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy. "It isn't a love story," Edward says of *Wuthering Heights*, "it's a hate story" (*Eclipse*).

Which is why Edward is my boyfriend. Because he's absolutely right: Heathcliff isn't a tragic, romantic figure, he's an obsessive psycho boyfriend from hell.

Just a few highlights from the Heathcliff file:

1. When Cathy marries Edgar "Girly-Boy" Linton instead of him, Heathcliff vows to take his revenge on Edgar and his family (because obviously Cathy had nothing to do with it. Ahem). Heathcliff sees his opportunity when he finds out Edgar's sister has a mad crush on him. He quickly seduces her, strangles her little dog just because that's how dating went back in those days (or maybe I misunderstood), and starts treating her like a servant the instant he marries her. Good times.
2. When the son of that union turns out to be even more sickly and whiny and incredibly annoying than even his Uncle Edgar, Heathcliff basically torments the boy into an early grave (although frankly, we can't blame him for that. Heathcliff's son could possibly be the most irritating character in all of literature).
3. Speaking of graves, when Cathy dies, Heathcliff tries to dig up her body so he can sleep next to it all night. And he tells himself that if he wakes up and finds her stiff and cold, he'll just pretend it's because the wind is particularly icy that night. Ewww. Let's leave the body where it is, shall we, lover boy?

What's disturbing is that, over time, both Bella and Edward begin to see the similarities between themselves and the *Wuthering Heights* lovers. Bella, like Cathy, feels torn between two men, and

even though some of us would argue that Jacob Black in no way measures up to Edward Cullen (although, granted, Jacob does have a usefully high body temperature), Bella doesn't view the choice as either easy or obvious. She does, however, recognize that the two men in her life are a lot better than the ones in Catherine Linton's, since "neither one is evil, neither one is weak" (*Eclipse*). We can definitely give her that.

And even though Edward is scornful of most of Heathcliff's behavior, he does empathize with him over one thing: Heathcliff's decision not to force Cathy to choose between him and her husband, even if her husband is a weak, pasty-faced, whiny-boy of a man. Cathy's husband, on the other hand, does force a choice, and banishes Heathcliff from the house.

As Heathcliff explains it:

And there you see the distinctions between our feelings: had he been in my place and I in his, though I hated him with a hatred that turned my life to gall, I never would have raised a hand against him. You may look incredulous, if you please! I never would have banished him from her society as long as she desired his. The moment her regard ceased, I would have torn his heart out, and drank his blood! But, till then—if you don't believe me, you don't know me—till then, I would have died by inches before I touched a single hair of his head!

(Notice the blood-drinking reference. Was Emily Brontë secretly writing the first girl-vampire romance? Why haven't any of those fancy British biographers caught on to that yet? Doesn't anyone read anymore?)

Like Heathcliff, Edward takes the high road and doesn't try to interfere with Bella's relationship with Jacob Black, even though

Edward—like the rest of us—can clearly see that Jacob is wrong, wrong, wrong for her.

But we won't quibble with all you Bella/Jacob shippers. Just know that you're sadly confused and need to reread the books.

Despite their few similarities, can we really say Edward and Heathcliff are anything alike? Let's review a few key points:

1. Edward is kind. He would rather hurt himself than see Bella hurt—for example, choosing in *New Moon* to leave her rather than continue exposing her to danger from his vampire family. Heathcliff, on the other hand, is happiest when everyone around him is suffering mightily. He'd like them all to die horrible deaths, and he does his best to assist them in that.
2. Edward is rational. Once he understands that Jacob Black is no threat to Bella, and in fact might offer her some protection when Edward is away, he cooperates by bringing Bella to Jacob whenever she wants—even though Edward knows Jacob is trying to steal Bella away from him. Heathcliff? Not so rational. See section about digging up dead body to sleep with it. 'Nuff said.
3. Edward is noble. He fights against his instincts, and drinks only animal blood (the vampire equivalent of being a vegan). He constantly risks his own life to save Bella and the people she loves. He resists taking her to bed, even though she's more than willing. Heathcliff exacts his revenge on everyone around him by cheating people out of their land, marrying a woman he despises, stealing children from their loving guardians just so he can torture them—the list goes on and on. Not a good date for Thanksgiving with your family.

Decision: Edward. By a WIDE margin.