

Twilight: Happily Never After

The latest occult thriller is riddled with distortions of good and evil and sends a dangerous message to young girls

by Women of Grace Staff

Move over Harry Potter. There's a new occult thriller in town and teens and tweens can't get enough of it.

It's called *Twilight*, a series of four books written by Stephanie Meyer based on a romance between a vampire named Edward Cullen and a mortal teen named Bella Swan.

The story begins when Bella moves to Washington state where she enrolls in a small town high school and finds herself drawn to her mysterious lab partner, Edward. As their attraction

grows, she learns more about Edward and his family, all of whom are vampires.

The four novels in the *Twilight* series are centered around this bizarre romance where the "undead" Edward struggles with himself not to feed on Bella's blood. He avoids having sex with her because he doesn't want her to become a vampire like him. But as Bella falls ever deeper in love, she repeatedly voices her willingness to forfeit her soul just to be with him forever.

As trite a plot as it might sound, *Twilight* is a phenomenal success. The four novels in the series, *Twilight*,

Eclipse, *New Moon* and *Breaking Dawn*, have sold more than 17 million copies principally to pre-teen and teen aged girls.

The series is also being adapted to the silver screen. The second movie, *New Moon*, debuted in November, 2009 and is on its way to becoming as successful as the first movie, *Twilight*, which was released by Summit Entertainment in November, 2008. The next movie in the sequel, *Eclipse*, is scheduled for release in June, 2010.

Young women are driving the success of the series. According to Box



Office Mojo, exit polling for the first movie found that 75 percent of the audience was female and 55 percent was under 25 years old.

The Appeal of the “Undeparted”

So what exactly is wrong with *Twilight*?

First, the series features the same literary duplicity found in the Harry Potter series. By peppering the story with moral issues that resonate with Christians, and convincing readers that vampires (or witchcraft, as in the case of Potter) can actually serve a good and noble purpose, the authors manage to disguise the occult beneath a veneer of righteousness that can easily trap the unwary.

For instance, the main character in *Twilight* is a vampire. According to Websters, a vampire is a corpse animated by an “undeparted” soul or a demon that periodically leaves the grave and disturbs the living. In traditional folklore, the vampire is typically a being that sucks the blood of sleeping persons at night.

Christians believe that only God holds the power of life and death, not “undeparted” souls or demons. Nor do they believe in the existence of “undeparted” souls. The *Catechism* makes it clear that man dies only once at which time he is judged by God and deemed worthy of either heaven, hell or purgatory. Only in Hollywood are departed souls left to wander around the universe looking for something to do, such as re-inhabiting their bodies and becoming blood-sucking vampires.

Although people are tempted to ignore criticism of *Twilight*, saying it’s just another vampire movie, this film is markedly different from *Dracula*, the famous 1931 movie starring Bela Lugosi. In *Dracula*, the plight of the vampire is presented as hideous and unattractive, definitely not something you would want to be. In *Twilight*, it’s just the opposite.

Edward is attractive and presented as a good guy even though he openly admits that he has killed people. The Cullen family, or coven as they refer to

themselves, are vegetarian vampires who only feed on animal blood. Carlisle Cullen, Edward’s father, is also a vampire but because he used to be a pastor, his faith makes him strive to rise above his vampirism by becoming a doctor and helping people, all values he tries to instill in his family.

The character of Bella has problems of her own. She repeatedly speaks about her strong desire to be with Edward forever, even if that means becoming a vampire, a creature who is eternally damned.

We are taught that the soul is that which is of greatest value in ourselves and what makes us in the image and likeness of God. What a dangerous message this sends to young girls that the priceless treasure of their soul can be tossed aside to win the man of their dreams.

Another troubling character in the story is Alice, one of Edward’s sisters who can see into the future. Alice and her occult practices repeatedly play key roles in the plot, making the use of divination seem appropriate and even important.

Many have also praised the fact that Edward and Bella’s relationship is chaste, but they are not abstaining for any moral reasons. Rather, it’s because Edward is too tempted to eat her, thus making her a vampire.

According to cult expert Caryn Matrisciana, in the end, Bella will indeed succumb to Edward’s charm and become a vampire. In a future movie, the two will have sex and a baby who turns out to be a kind of hybrid vampire-human that is sucking Bella’s blood from the inside. Bella dies during childbirth and it is at this time that Edward finally bites her, bringing her back to “life” as a vampire.

Of course teens, and their parents, don’t know this when they first become hooked on the series.

Troubling Origins

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of all about the *Twilight* series is the origin of the story.

Stephenie Meyer, a Mormon, is a housewife and mother of three who claims she received *Twilight* in a dream on June 2, 2003.

“In my dream, two people were having an intense conversation in a meadow in the woods,” Meyers writes on her website. “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.” From that point on, she was driven to write the story, often climbing out of bed in the middle of the night to write “because Bella and Edward were, quite literally, voices in my head. They simply wouldn’t shut up,” she writes.

Even more disturbing, Meyer claims she had another dream after the book was finished. In this dream, Edward appeared and told her the book was wrong and that he did drink human blood because he could not live on only animal blood.

“We had this conversation”, Meyer said, “and he was terrifying.”

The *Twilight* series is spawning a cult-like following among young girls who call themselves “Twilighters” and who celebrate Stephenie Meyer Day on Sept. 13 in honor of Bella’s fictional birthday. They wear t-shirts sporting sayings such as “Forbidden Fruit Tastes the Best.”

Monsignor Franco Perazzolo of the Pontifical Council of Culture warned that the *Twilight* saga is “nothing more than a moral vacuum with a deviant message and as such should be of concern.” And even secular reviewers admit the story is a “dark romance that seeps into the soul.”

But the worst part about *Twilight* is the way it ends. Instead of happily-ever-after, this story ends in eternal death.