

2014

Twilight: The Unveiling of Victims, Stalking, and Domestic Violence, 21 *Cardozo J. L. & Gender* 39 (2014)

Susan L. Brody

John Marshall Law School, 7brody@jmls.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://repository.jmls.edu/facpubs>

 Part of the [Entertainment, Arts, and Sports Law Commons](#), [Family Law Commons](#), [Juvenile Law Commons](#), [Law and Gender Commons](#), and the [Sexuality and the Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Susan Brody, Twilight: The Unveiling of Victims, Stalking, and Domestic Violence, 21 *Cardozo J. L. & Gender* 39 (2014)

<http://repository.jmls.edu/facpubs/590>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The John Marshall Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of The John Marshall Institutional Repository.

TWILIGHT: THE UNVEILING OF VICTIMS, STALKING, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SUSAN L. BRODY*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction.....	41
II. History and Synopses of Twilight	50
A. History	50
B. Synopses of the Books.....	52
1. <i>Twilight</i>	52
2. <i>New Moon</i>	53
3. <i>Eclipse</i>	54
4. <i>Breaking Dawn</i>	54
III. Bella is Crafted to be a Victim of Her Own Life Circumstances and of Edward’s Powerful World.....	56
A. Bella Is A Victim Of Her Own World.....	56
1. Bella Is A Victim Of Her Family Life Circumstances.....	57
2. Bella’s Personality, Physical Traits, And Lack Of Interests Also Make Her A Victim	60
B. Bella Is Allured By Edward And His World Because They Will Magically Transform Her and Her Life.	63
1. In Edward’s World, Bella Will No Longer Be Alone, And She Will Have Instantaneous Family, Friends, And A Social Group To Which She Belongs.	63
2. In Edward’s World, Bella Will Be Graceful, Agile, Coordinated, And Beautiful; She Will Have Purpose And Be Freed From Painful Human Emotions.	65
C. Unveiling The Realities Of The Vampire World Reveal Bella To Be A Victim There Too: Preyed Upon, Defined, Controlled, And Dominated	66
1. The Vampire World Causes Bella To “Fall Prey” To Edward, - Just As Humans Are Supposed To Do.....	67

* Susan L. Brody is a Professor of Law at The John Marshall Law School in Chicago, Illinois. The author gratefully acknowledges and thanks Ashley Charen, Katherine Gaughan, Kristine Michel, Mary Leukam, and Linlee Rohrer for their invaluable contribution, insights, and research assistance.

40	CARDOZO JOURNAL OF LAW & GENDER	[Vol. 21:39
	2. The Vampire World Of “Secrecy” Will Keep Bella Isolated.	67
	3. The Vampire World Will Maintain Bella’s Attraction To Domineering Men Who Offer Her Protection, Strength, And Power But Exert Control Over Her.....	68
IV.	Bella Is a Victim of Illegal Acts.....	70
	A. Bella Is a Victim of Stalking	70
	B. Bella Is a Victim of Domestic Violence	78
	C. Bella Is Surrounded by Other Acts of Domestic Violence.....	85
V.	Consequences of Twilight and the Remaking of Bella	87
	A. Consequences for the Reader	87
	B. Alternatives to Make Bella a More Deserving Heroine and Role Model.....	89
	1. Bella Chooses Jacob.....	89
	2. Edward Is Lured Into Bella’s Human World.	91
	3. Bella Has Become A Vampire But Realizes The Decision To Do So Was Not Her Own And Wants To Become Human Again.....	92
	4. Bella Chooses Edward, Becomes A Vampire, And Lives Happily Ever After But She Has Different Life Circumstances, And There Is No Control Or Violence.	93
VI.	Conclusion.....	93

[L]arge purplish bruises were beginning to blossom across the pale skin of my arm. My eyes followed the trail they made up to my shoulder, and then down across my ribs It throbbed a little.

. . . .
. . . .

I tried to remember this—to remember pain—but I couldn’t. I couldn’t recall a moment when his hold had been too tight, his hands too hard against me. I only remembered wanting him to hold me tighter, and being pleased when he did.¹

I. INTRODUCTION

These “morning after” reflections are those of seventeen-year-old Isabella (“Bella”) Swan, the “heroine” of the love story presented in the Twilight saga.² The four-book saga tells Bella’s story as she falls in love with and ultimately marries Edward Cullen, whom she does not at first realize is a vampire. Bella first meets Edward, an extremely attractive teenage boy, when he sits next to her in what is otherwise a typical high school biology class.³ In a typical teenage boy fashion, Edward virtually ignores her. Bella is unaware that Edward is a vampire who made a commitment to no longer live on human blood. However, this commitment is tested when he meets Bella because she has a scent that is particularly delectable to him.⁴ In spite of such obstacles, Bella and Edward are able to develop a deep and lasting romantic relationship, taking the reader on a 2,000-plus-page journey.⁵

Published between 2005 and 2008, the books in the Twilight saga were an instant success. The books alone sold over one hundred million copies⁶ and have

¹ STEPHENIE MEYER, *BREAKING DAWN* 1, 89 (2008) [hereinafter *BREAKING DAWN*].

² Perhaps one of the most intriguing cultural phenomena to date in the twenty-first century, the Twilight saga is comprised of author Stephenie Meyer’s books I through IV: *TWILIGHT* (2005) [hereinafter *TWILIGHT*], *NEW MOON* (2006) [hereinafter *NEW MOON*], *ECLIPSE* (2007) [hereinafter *ECLIPSE*], and *BREAKING DAWN* (2008) respectively. That the books are a cultural “phenomenon,” is even acknowledged by the publisher who took a chance on Stephenie Meyer, a previously unpublished author. See Harriet Alexander, *Twilight: Book Breaks Sales Records*, THE TELEGRAPH (Nov. 17, 2009), <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/6590249/Twilight-book-breaks-sales-records.html> (“CEO and publisher at Little, Brown said, ‘Popular doesn’t even begin to describe it—the Twilight saga is a phenomenon in its own right and like *Harry Potter* it has generated a global sensation that crosses several media.’”).

³ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 23. Because the books and the series have the same name, in the text and in the narrative portion of the footnotes, the term Twilight (without italics) will refer to the series/cultural phenomenon, but *Twilight* (with italics) will refer to the first book of the eponymous series.

⁴ *Id.* at 270 (Edward describing the way Bella’s fragrance affects him: “The fragrance coming off your skin I thought it would make me deranged [T]he scent was maddening It was easier outside, when I couldn’t smell you anymore, to think clearly, to make the right decision.”); see also *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 266-68 (describing Bella’s scent being more irresistible to Edward than anyone else’s).

⁵ The four books of the Twilight saga were published originally at a combined length of 2,444 pages.

⁶ Little, Brown to Publish Official ‘Twilight’ Guide, PUBLISHERS WKLY. (Oct. 6, 2010), <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-book-news/article/44733-little->

been translated into thirty-seven languages.⁷ The books were on the New York Times Bestsellers list for 190 weeks⁸ and dominated the USA Today Best-Selling Books list.⁹ Author Stephenie Meyer dominated that list, breaking records previously set by J. K. Rowling, author of the *Harry Potter* series.¹⁰ More than four million copies were sold in a twelve-month span.¹¹ Each book was chosen through an American Library Association poll to join the teen choice “Best Book for Young Adults.”¹² But the fanfare goes beyond merely reading. Fans created

brown-to-publish-official-twilight-guide.html (noting that the Twilight saga had sold over 116 million copies by October 2010).

⁷ See Kenneth Turan, *You Wanna Neck?* L.A. TIMES (Nov. 21, 2008), <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/nov/21/entertainment/et-twilight21> (noting that the books had already been translated in 37 languages by the time the first movie came out); see also PUBLISHERS WKLY., *supra* note 6 (noting that the publication rights for the Twilight saga have been sold in nearly 50 countries).

⁸ See *Best Sellers: Children's Series*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 17, 2011), <http://www.nytimes.com/bestsellers-books/2011-04-17/series-books/list.html> (last visited Sept. 9, 2013) (The Twilight saga spent 190 weeks on the New York Times Bestsellers List: *Children's Series*).

⁹ See Carol Memmott & Mary Cadden, *Twilight Series Eclipses Potter Records on Best-Selling List*, USA TODAY (Aug. 9, 2009), http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2009-08-03-twilight-series_N.htm (noting the Twilight series dominance on the best-selling books list as compared the *Harry Potter* series); see also, Bob Minzesheimer & Anthony DeBarros, *Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Series Sweeps Top Four Spots*, USA TODAY (Jan. 14, 2010), http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2010-01-14-topsellers14_ST_N.htm (observing that the Twilight saga held the top four spots in the best-selling books of the year in 2008 and 2009, which had never been done before in the list's 16 years).

¹⁰ The *Harry Potter* series is a seven-book young adult series that tells the story of an orphan boy wizard's adolescence and fight against the dark powers that killed his parents and threaten his world. The seven books were published between 1997 and 2007. Like the Twilight series, it is a young adult book series with fantasy themes written by a previously unknown author, who was raising children and not currently employed outside the home. The *Harry Potter* series was enormously successful, and each book's release was heavily anticipated. The series was also turned into eight films, which also launched the careers of the young actors portraying Harry and his friends. The seven books are the best-selling book series in history and have sold over 450 million copies in sixty-seven different languages. The *Harry Potter* brand is worth billions of dollars. See Bob Brad Minzesheimer, *Harry Potter Gets New Book Cover for 15th Anniversary*, USA TODAY (Feb. 13, 2013), <http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/books/2013/02/12/harry-potter-new-book-covers/1914149/> (noting that the books have sold over 450 million copies to date); *Rowling Makes £5 Every Second*, BBC (Oct. 3, 2008), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/7649962.stm> (observing that the books have been translated into 67 languages); Patrick Foster, *Business Big Shot*, TIMES (U.K.), at 43, (Apr. 2, 2008). Given the similarities between the creation, publication, and immediate success of the *Twilight* and *Harry Potter* young adult fantasy series, many comparisons have been made. See Casey O'Lear, *Twilight v. Harry Potter: Fantasy Showdown*, THE NEV. SAGEBRUSH (Nov. 18, 2008), <http://nevadasagebrush.com/blog/2008/11/18/twilight-vs-harry-potter-fantasy-showdown/>; Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg, *Booksellers Find Life After Harry In a Vampire Novel*, WALL ST. J. (Aug. 10, 2007), <http://online.wsj.com/articles/SB118670290131693667>; Eric Veal, *Twilight vs. Harry Potter, Which Franchise is #1?*, THE A&T REGISTER (Jan. 31, 2012), http://www.ncatregister.com/business/local_business/twilight-vs-harry-potter-which-franchise-is/article_35b497c4-1008-11e1-a793-001a4bcf6878.html; see Alexander, *supra* note 2 (noting that *Twilight* sold over one million copies faster than *Harry Potter*).

¹¹ Lev Grossman, *Stephenie Meyer: A New J.K. Rowling?*, TIME MAG. (Apr. 24, 2008).

¹² The American Library Association (“ALA”) creates an annual Top Ten List of the Best Books for Young Adults (“BBYA”), which is decided by popular vote during a month of voting once a year. See Young Adult Library Services Association (“YALSA”), *About the Teens' Top Ten*, <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/teenstopten>; *BBYA 2006 Top Ten with Annotations*, YALSA, <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklists/bestbooksya/annotations/06toptenbbya> (*Twilight* made the 2006 Young Adult Library Services Association); *New Moon* was listed in the 2007 YALSA,

2014]

TWILIGHT

43

hundreds of internet fan sites,¹³ not only in English but also in Spanish, French, German, and Italian.¹⁴

The books were also made into five immensely successful movies with astounding attendance and earning billions of dollars at the box office.¹⁵ Both the books and the movies drew large crowds to meet the stars and author or attend midnight release parties.¹⁶ At one book event, 3,000 fans arrived just to meet

2007 *Teens' Top Ten*, <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/07ttt>; *Eclipse* was on the 2008 YALSA, *The 2008 Teens' Top Ten*, <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/ttt2008>; *Breaking Dawn* was listed on the 2009 Young Adult Library Services Association, *The 2008 Teens' Top Ten*, <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklists/bestbooksya/annotations/06toptenbbya>. *Twilight* was also named on the ALA Top Ten Challenged Books lists in 2009 and 2010, citing complaints about the book's "religious viewpoint," "violence," "sexually explicit" behavior, and being "unsuited to the age group." See Banned & Challenged Books, *Frequently Challenged Books of the 21st Century*, AM. LIBRARY ASS'N, <http://www.ala.org/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10>. Other books on the ALA lists that parents seek to have banned from schools, including recently, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and the children's book series *Captain Underpants* by Dav Pilkey. See, Emanuella Grinberg, *Banned Books Week: 'Captain Underpants' Tops List of Challenged Books*, CNN (Sept. 24, 2013), <http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/24/living/banned-books-week/index.html> (noting that the ALA ranked *Captain Underpants* the number one banned book in 2012 because of complaints of "offensive language" and that the book was "unsuited to the age group."); see also Elizabeth Blair, *Hold on To Your Tightly Whities, Captain Underpants is Back!*, NPR (Jan. 15, 2013), <http://www.npr.org/2013/01/15/169326364/hold-on-to-your-tightly-whities-captain-underpants-is-back>. (*Captain Underpants* has been a hugely successful series. The books are on the ALA *Hit List* of most complained about books because of nudity, vulgar language, and disrespect for authority); *Banned Books Weeks Highlights What's Taken Out at Schools*, NPR (Sept. 23, 2013), <http://www.npr.org/2013/09/23/225334760/banned-books-week-highlights-whats-taken-out-at-schools> (observing that *Captain Underpants* is the most banned book in America, and the "whole series is said to be unsuited for kids.").

¹³ There are 377 fan websites listed on Stephenie Meyer's website in English alone. *Twilight Series Fansites*, STEPHENIEMEYER.COM, http://stepheniemeyer.com/ts_fansites.html (Meyer's website lists 377 English language fansites). Another collection of sites said there were 979 *Twilight* fan websites listed in their collection: *Twilight Wiki*, WIKI, http://twilightsaga.wikia.com/wiki/Fan_sites.

¹⁴ See *id.* (additional languages for the fansites include: Czech, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, and Swedish).

¹⁵ Dorothy Pomerantz, *Looking at Twilight by the Numbers*, FORBES (Nov. 16, 2012), <http://www.forbes.com/sites/dorothypomerantz/2012/11/16/looking-at-twilight-by-the-numbers/> (estimating that the movie franchise has earned \$2.5 billion worldwide, and if the DVD and television showings were included, the amount would be nearer to \$5 billion); see also *Total Twilight Franchise Sales/Revenue*, STATIC BRAIN, <http://www.statisticbrain.com/total-twilight-franchise-sales-revenue> (estimating total franchise sales of the movies and merchandise to be \$5.7 billion as of November 27, 2012).

¹⁶ See Louise Saunders, *That Will Make Their Friends Green With Envy*, DAILY MAIL, July 12, 2012, at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2172490/Comic-Con-2012-Twilight-stars-meet-fans.html> (describing the crowds that the movie fans draw when they attend events, such as Comic Con); Madison Vanderburg, *Twilight Stars React to Woman's Death at Comic Con*, HOLLYSCOOP (July 11, 2012), <http://www.hollyscoop.com/twilight/twilight-stars-react-to-woman---s-death-at-comic-con.html> (one fan was even killed crossing the street to ComicCon to meet the *Twilight* movie stars); Nick Clark, *Stephenie Meyer Fans Queue From 5am till Twilight for The Host Book Signing in London*, THE INDEPENDENT (Mar. 5, 2013) <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/stephenie-meyer-fans-queue-from-5am-till-twilight-for-the-host-book-signing-in-london-8521428.html> (fans have waited in line up to 13 hours at book signing events to meet Stephenie Meyer). See also *Breaking Dawn Photos*, STEPHENIEMEYER.COM, http://stepheniemeyer.com/bd_parties.html (providing a photos of a variety of midnight release parties for the fourth book in the *Twilight* saga, *Breaking Dawn*, including the fans who dressed up as their favorite characters to show their excitement).

Stephenie Meyer.¹⁷ The franchise launched Meyer's career¹⁸ and many of the movies' young stars.¹⁹ In addition to viewing their love story on screen, Edward and Bella fans can also purchase dolls in their likeness,²⁰ wedding gowns designed to be identical to the dress Bella wore when she and Edward wed,²¹ bedding, phone cases, and jewelry all inspired by the Twilight series.²²

¹⁷ See Grossman, *supra* note 11.

¹⁸ See *infra* note 19.

¹⁹ Kristen Stewart was cast as Bella when she was 17, which launched her career; by 2010, Stewart earned approximately \$28.5 million for her work in three movies that year and was the highest earning female actress on Vanity Fair Magazine *2010's Top Hollywood Top Earners*. Floyd Allen, *Twilight Star, Kristen Stewart Hollywood's Highest Earning Female Actress*, INT'L BUS. TIMES (Feb. 4, 2011), <http://au.ibtimes.com/articles/108743/20110204/2010-top-hollywood-earners-kristen-stewart-highest-earning-female-actress.htm#.Ulok9hD91tA>. Robert Pattinson, who plays Edward Cullen, earned a lot from the Twilight films, and he was #50 on the Forbes Celebrity 100, naming the most powerful celebrities. *The Celebrity 100*, FORBES, http://www.forbes.com/lists/2010/53/celeb-100-10_Robert-Pattinson_TZ0B.html. In 2010, Pattinson was also named to the Time Magazine 100 Most Influential People in the World. Chris Weitz, *The 2010 Time 100: Robert Pattinson*, TIME MAG., http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1984685_1984940_1984948,00.html#ixz20mUOIhqVr (the rave comments in *Time's* tribute were written by the director of one of the Twilight movies).

²⁰ Mattel's Barbie doll line has created a Twilight saga series: including Edward, Bella, Jacob, the other members of the Cullen family, Victoria, and Jane (a member of the Volturi). Notably, Bella has two dolls: one when she is a human where she is wearing jeans and a long sleeve shirt, and another for *Breaking Dawn, Part II*, which is after she becomes a vampire where she is fashionably dressed in all black. Mattel, *The Twilight Saga Collection*, BARBIE COLLECTOR, <http://www.barbiecollector.com/collection/twilight-saga-collection>.

²¹ Daisy Dumas, *How to Look Like a Wedding Bella: \$799 Replica of Breaking Dawn Gown Hits Stores Just Days After Movie Release*, DAILY MAIL (Nov. 23, 2011), <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2064849/Twilight-Breaking-Dawn-wedding-dress-How-look-like-Kristen-Stewarts-Bella-Swan.html>. See also Debra Krein, *Inspired by the Edward and Bella Wedding: The Bella Swan Wedding Dress and Accessories*, MY WEDDING CHAT (Dec. 2, 2011), <http://www.weddingshoppeinc.com/blog/index.php/2011/12/02/bella-swan-wedding-dress-replica/>.

²² A variety of paraphernalia is available. See *Destroy Your Soul Duvet*, AMAZON.COM, http://www.amazon.com/Twilight-New-Moon-Edward-Destroy/dp/B002R0DOMM/ref=sr_1_1?s=toys-and-games&ie=UTF8&qid=1342704197&sr=1-1 (last visited Sept. 11, 2014) (among other bedding available, the duvet has a large photo of Edward's face above the question he poses to Bella in *Twilight*: "What choice have I? I cannot live without you, but I will not destroy your soul."); *Ring Puzzle*, AMAZON.COM, http://www.amazon.com/Twilight-Eclipse-Jigsaw-Puzzle-Ring/dp/B003NNVAIW/ref=sr_1_19?s=toys-and-games&ie=UTF8&qid=1342704267&sr=1-19 (last visited Sept. 11, 2014) (a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle that creates the image of Edward putting the engagement ring on Bella's finger); *"Turn Me" Doll, Complete with the Walking Cast*, AMAZON.COM, http://www.amazon.com/AMAZON-EXCLUSIVE-Tonner-Turn-Bella/dp/B002CMLDUU/ref=sr_1_24?s=toys-and-games&ie=UTF8&qid=1342704267&sr=1-24 (last visited Sept. 11, 2014) (providing a fifteen inch doll of Bella wearing the dress she wore to her high school prom in *Twilight*. The doll includes a "walking cast" on her foot as Bella had in the book, because prom was while she was recovering from her life-threatening injuries obtained when James attacked her and the Cullens had to come to Arizona to save her life); *Edward as an Action figure*, AMAZON.COM, http://www.amazon.com/Twilight-Edward-Cullen-Action-Figure/dp/B002O5PK9K/ref=sr_1_4?s=toys-and-games&ie=UTF8&qid=1342704267&sr=1-4 (last visited Sept. 11, 2014) (a seven inch action figure of Edward Cullen, as inspired by the *New Moon* movie); *Cullen Crest Jewelry Kit*, AMAZON.COM, http://www.amazon.com/Twilight-AMAZON-EXCLUSIVE-Replica-Jewelry/dp/B002WGHX12/ref=sr_1_9?s=toys-and-games&ie=UTF8&qid=1342704267&sr=1-9 (last visited Sept. 11, 2014) (the kit includes Edward's wristcuff, Rosalie's necklace, Esme's bracelet, Bella's ring, Carlisle's ring, and Alice's choker all bearing the Cullen family crest); *Bella Hair Comb*, AMAZON.COM, http://www.amazon.com/Twilight-Breaking-Dawn-Bellas-Velvet/dp/B005TKVM2G/ref=pd_sim_t_1 (last visited Sept. 11, 2014) (a replica of the jeweled hair comb that Bella wore at her wedding to Edward in *Breaking Dawn*); *Replica Wedding Rings*, AMAZON.COM, <http://www.amazon.com/Twilight-Breaking-Bellas-Engagement->

2014]

TWILIGHT

45

The sensation over Edward and Bella is not limited to teenagers. Indeed the AARP devoted an article to the Twilight phenomenon, positing that the books take women of mature years back to a time “when they were 17” or younger, when “they had crushes”, [or] “when the cute guy they watched from afar actually spoke to them.”²³ Women in their 30s, 40s, and 50s are also included alongside the scores of young girls swooning over Edward Cullen.²⁴ Some adult women were reported to have been obsessed to the point of sleeplessness, disintegrating marriages, and countless hours on internet fan sites and blogs.²⁵ Even more stunning is a report that the vastly successful adult book series, beginning with *Fifty Shades of Grey*,²⁶ began as Twilight fan fiction,²⁷ targeting an older reading

Wedding/dp/B005TLNETE/ref=pd_sim_t_2 (last visited Sept. 11, 2014);

Engagement Ring, AMAZON.COM, http://www.amazon.com/Twilight-Eclipse-Bellas-Engagement-Replica/dp/B003NNVAPU/ref=pd_sim_t_3 (last visited Sept. 12, 2014); *Edward's Name Heart Necklace*, AMAZON.COM, http://www.amazon.com/Twilight-Eclipse-Edward-Script-Necklace/dp/B003NNVAQE/ref=pd_sim_t_14 (last visited Sept. 12, 2014); *Charm Bracelet Replica*, AMAZON.COM, http://www.amazon.com/Twilight-Eclipse-Bellas-Heart-Bracelet/dp/B003NNVAQ4/ref=pd_sim_t_5 (last visited Sept. 12, 2014) (imitating the one that Bella wore in the books, including the 2 charms she had: one from Jacob and one from Edward. The packaging including photos of Edward and Jacob turned away from each other, above each of their charms); *Phone Cases*, AMAZON.COM, <http://www.target.com/s?searchTerm=twilight+phone+case&category=0>All|matchallpartial|all+categories> (last visited Sept. 12, 2014) (phone cases for iPhones, one including a photo of Edward and Bella embracing, and another of Jacob in the woods); *Reversible Bag*, AMAZON.COM, <http://www.target.com/p/twilight-saga-new-moon-team-edward-team-jacob-reversible-bag/-/A-12277894> (last visited Sept. 12, 2014) (one side was for “Team Edward” and the other for “Team Jacob”); *Jacob “Dog Tags”*, AMAZON.COM, <http://www.target.com/p/twilight-saga-new-moon-dog-tags-jacob-in-the-forest/-/A-12277642> (last visited Sept. 12, 2014); *Twilight Reprinted As A Graphic Novel*, AMAZON.COM, <http://www.target.com/p/twilight-the-graphic-novel-1-reprint-paperback/-/A-13859608> (last visited Sept. 12, 2014).

²³ Melissa Stanton, *Confessions of a Grown ‘Twihard’*, AARP (Nov. 16, 2012), <http://www.aarp.org/entertainment/movies-for-grownups/info-11-2011/Confessions-of-a-Grown-Twihard.html>.

²⁴ Samantha Smithstein, *Craving a ‘Twilight’ Romance, What the Wild Things Are*, PSYCHOLOGY TODAY BLOG, Jul. 2, 2010, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/what-the-wild-things-are/201007/craving-twilight-romance>.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Fifty Shades* is a trilogy of erotic romance books that centers around the relationship between a naïve, inexperienced young woman and a domineering man, whose sexual preferences lean toward bondage. The trilogy holds the record as the fastest selling paperback, and its weekly sales surpassed both Harry Potter and the Twilight saga. See Paul Bentley, ‘Mommy Porn’ *Fifty Shades of Grey* Outstrips Harry Potter to Become the Fastest Selling Paperback of All Time, DAILY MAIL (Jun. 18, 2012), <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2160862/Fifty-Shades-Of-Grey-book-outstrips-Harry-Potter-fastest-selling-paperback-time.html>. The author, E. L. James, is a former television executive and the mother of two, living in West London. The story grew out of her self-published online Twilight fan fiction. She published fan fiction under the pseudonym, “Snowqueens Icedragon.” See Belinda Luscombe, *James’ Bondage: The Shy British Mum Whose Naughty Book Set U.S. Hearts Afire*, TIME MAG. (Apr. 9, 2012) (readily acknowledging that the *Fifty Shades* series started as Twilight fan fiction called, “Master of the Universe,” with protagonists called Bella Swan and Edward Cullen and was published on fanfiction.net, among the almost 200,000 of other Twilight fan fiction pieces published there. From there, James was asked to speak at Twilight fan-fiction panels at Comic-Con, and her popularity grew before she was published by a small publishing house that was made as outlet for fan fiction authors’ works. The publisher coaxed James for over a year to publish *Fifty Shades*); see also Rebecca Keegan & Nicole Sperling, ‘*Fifty Shades of Grey*’ by E.L. James is Selling Books (And More), LOS ANGELES TIMES (Apr. 17, 2012), <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/17/entertainment/la-et-fifty-shades-of-grey-20120417> (a 37-year-old married mother of three, who usually reads biographies and classics, studied English literature in college, and donates money to the Feminist Majority said, “I was a

audience.²⁸ Indeed the craze and popularity of the *Fifty Shades* series is an astounding cultural phenomenon in its own right.²⁹ That its motivation stems from the Twilight series only strengthens the force of the impact Twilight has on American culture and those who read it.

Twilight's popularity and impact may be good for the author and perhaps the economy, but not necessarily for the teenage readership. Insofar as these books are written for teens and read by thousands—if not millions—of teenage women, it goes without saying that teens are, consciously or not, likely taking in Bella Swan as a role model. Even if teen women do not seek Bella as a role model in all respects, at the very least, some teen women, may “see” themselves “in” Bella, as she is embarking on a teenage journey of self-discovery. Bella's view of herself, her self-worth, her potential role/s in life, and her judgments and decision-making cannot help but influence young teen women who are embarking on a similar journey. Likewise, teen women dreaming of a “romantic” relationship similar to that shared by Edward and Bella may, consciously or not, view Edward's treatment of Bella as model behavior for a lover or a mate.

Unfortunately, the characters in the Twilight saga do not give readers healthy role models. Though many readers identify with Bella's “every-woman” character, Bella's decisions and actions should not be emulated. The easy relationship

little horrified that I would be this fascinated by a story of a man dominating a woman I've definitely started reading more smut [after reading *Fifty Shades*].” Another reader who is 34 and lives in New York City has read the trilogy three times, and does not want to read other books because of her attachment to the male protagonist: “It's very bizarre . . . I've never had a book that captures my attention the way this book has. I have never fallen in love with a character as I have fallen in love with Christian Grey. As much as he is a freak and there is something wrong with him, there is something about him that you want to be a part of.”); *see also* *Of Brooms and Bondage*, THE ECONOMIST (May 5, 2012) (discussing the fast sales *Fifty Shades of Grey* and how its internet following, e-books publication, and popularity spread by word of mouth reflect current changes in the publishing industry).

²⁷ *See* Ewan Morrison, *In the Beginning, There Was Fan Fiction: From the Four Gospels to Fifty Shades*, THE GUARDIAN (Aug. 13, 2012), <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/aug/13/fan-fiction-fifty-shades-grey> (starting with the early use of tropes or folklore in creating Shakespearean stories, to the Jane Austen and Sherlock Holmes fan groups who used similar characters or would write new stories the author's characters. Science fiction stories started to attract fan fiction. As fan fiction grew into other genres, a theme of dark sexual undertones developed. The styles of fan fiction are also discussed including “slash,” “mashups” and “AU” [alternative universe] fanfiction. Much of Twilight AU fanfiction is pornographic. *Fifty Shades* developed in this strain of Twilight fanfiction: “Although the author then tried to erase evidence of its fanfic origins, it's clear that rather than being some lightning bolt new genre called ‘Mommy porn,’ *Fifty Shades* is actually a very generic work of Twilight fanfic from amongst tens of thousands already created. It is, in fact, a piece of ‘AU het slash Twilight fic,’ and as we've seen, in all slash fic, sex and sexual violence are the predictable components of the genre.”); *see also* Kara Warner, ‘*Twilight*,’ ‘*50 Shades of Grey*,’ and *The Fanfic Phenomenon*, MTV.COM, <http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1682408/twilight-50-shades-of-grey-fan-fiction.jhtml/> (noting the similarities between Twilight and *Fifty Shades of Grey*, including the naïve woman who is drawn to the older, experienced, wealthy man. Also, much fanfiction is explicitly sexual, but seeing that some fanfiction authors are breaking into mainstream publishing.).

²⁸ Meredith Bennett-Smith, ‘*50 Shades of Grey*’ Grey: *What is the appeal?*, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR (Mar. 15, 2012), <http://www.csmonitor.com/Books/chapter-and-verse/2012/0315/50-Shades-of-Grey-What-is-the-appeal> (discussing that the books arose from Twilight fan fiction, but readers are generally a little older than the young women who read Twilight, and discusses the “pornographic” or “erotic” nature of the stories).

²⁹ *See* Bentley, *supra* note 26.

between the reader and Bella misleads readers into a false romanticization of Bella's exciting, chosen life as the heroine of a supernatural love story. The author has fashioned Bella's most human and relatable traits as a lack of confidence, low self-esteem, and minimal self-worth. Worse yet, she has fashioned her most human and relatable experiences in acts of male domination and control, which legally constitute both stalking and domestic violence. Bella is unable to recognize these wrongs and tragically romanticizes them, which paralyzes her and prevents her from having any ability to walk away. Instead of creating a heroine who believes in her own power, protects herself, and teaches young women about courage, self-esteem, and meaningful choice, Meyer's "heroine" is a victim who makes decisions from a place of vulnerability. Although Bella eventually obtains strength and power, it is given to her only after she submits to her man's world and becomes a vampire. Bella is a dangerous role model for impressible women who relate to Bella's foibles and vulnerability as their own and who subliminally learn from these books that weaknesses and doubts about themselves can be overcome by finding true love; in other words, strength comes from what a man and his world can give heterosexual women.

Many, including "Twiards,"³⁰ defend the Twilight saga as merely fantasy and fun, and thus refute all the themes that will be presented by this Article. Indeed, an "it's-just-a-fantasy" assertion is not only a valid one, but perhaps the strongest one in favor of Twilight and its story. This Article will show, however, that sexual violence and control of Bella are so deeply embedded and intertwined with Bella's fantastical love story, that she—and the reader—cannot recognize the legal wrongs perpetrated against her. Worse yet, they are glamorized as acts of love. The setting and style of Twilight give the reader a message, albeit subliminal, that acts of violence should not only be considered "normal" and "disregarded" or tolerated when the perpetrator loves you, but they are to be savored. Here is how.

Bella and Edward meet in a setting and under circumstances with which the every-day-human-teen can relate. The Twilight saga unfolds in Bella's world: in her high school,³¹ in her science class,³² school cafeteria, and among her classmates and friends. Edward is just a good-looking classmate who sits next to Bella in Biology class,³³ and his vampire siblings attend the same high school as well.³⁴ The vampires are embedded in Bella's typical world of homework, reading assignments, movies, dances, proms, and dilemmas with friends. The vampires do

³⁰ A term for diehard Twilight fans.

³¹ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 12 ("Forks High School") is the backdrop that typifies Bella's human world.

³² *Id.* at 23 ("When we entered the [Biology] classroom, Angela went to sit at a black-topped lab table exactly like the ones I was used to . . . [A]ll the tables were filled but one . . . I recognized Edward Cullen . . . sitting next to that single open seat.")

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ *Id.* at 18 ("It was there, sitting in the lunchroom . . . that I first saw them . . . There were five of them."); *Id.* at 20-21 (Jessica explains to Bella that they are a family, adopted by Dr. Cullen and his wife).

not elicit deathly fear in humans, do not come out only on dark nights, and do not live entirely isolated from human society. In stark contrast, albeit somewhat unusual in looks and behavior,³⁵ they are extraordinarily nice, live nearby,³⁶ are devoted to family,³⁷ and even are interested in helping the world. Carlisle Cullen, the patriarch, is a brilliant doctor³⁸ who works a normal job at the local hospital.³⁹

The supernatural elements of the vampire world also first appear in Bella's ordinary life. Edward saves her life by using his speed and strength to keep her away from a moving car in the high school parking lot that would have crushed her.⁴⁰ When Bella ultimately falls for Edward, it is within her own world, one relatable to all young women. The setting and characters thus encourage the reader to fantasize that it is possible for your very own "Edward" to be your neighbor or sitting right next to you in school. Bella's journey could be the reader's own.

Further adding to its "ordinary" tone, the story is told from Bella's first-person perspective, making her even more relatable. The reader experiences the encounters of violence from Bella's viewpoint, and the reader is manipulated into accepting Bella's glamorized views, as "romantic," without fully recognizing the danger.⁴¹ When Bella accepts, in the name of love, that Edward's strength may at

³⁵ *Id.* at 24 ("I couldn't stop myself from peeking . . . at the strange boy next to me . . . [H]e never relaxed . . . What was wrong with him? Was this his normal behavior?").

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Id.* at 36, 37 ("[T]hey stick together the way a family should.").

³⁸ *Id.* at 36 (Charlie tells Bella, "Dr. Cullen is a brilliant surgeon . . . [A]n asset to the community.").

³⁹ *Id.* at 336.

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 26-7.

⁴¹ Stephenie Meyer released a draft of the first several chapters of a book that has never been published called *Midnight Sun*. This book idea tells the *Twilight* story from Edward's perspective; it uses the same dialogue as *Twilight*, but is narrated by Edward. When the story is told in Edward's voice, he recognizes the legal wrongs he perpetrates and the danger he poses to Bella. He refers to himself as a "stalker" twice. Stephenie Meyer, *Midnight Sun*, 75, 189 (unpublished manuscript) (on file with author) Edward is amazed when he admits to his crime, and Bella only smiles: "I'd just admitted to stalking her, and she was smiling." *Id.* at 189. Edward also refers to himself as a "peeping tom." *Id.* at 106, 163. The first night he watches her sleep, he says: "I was repulsed by myself as I watched her toss again. How was I any better than some sick peeping tom? I wasn't any better. I was much, much worse." *Id.* at 106. However, as Bella and Edward continue to develop their relationship, Edward's behavior does not change, and he justifies it as protecting her in ways that other men could not. When he eavesdrops on Bella's conversation with her father, Charlie, he eventually leaves them to their evening and says he would return when she was sleeping: "I would not trespass on her privacy the way a peeping tom would have. I was here for her protection, not to leer at her the way Mike Newton [Bella's classmate] no doubt would have, were he agile enough to move through the treetops the way I could. I would not treat her so crassly." *Id.* at 163. Not only does Edward recognize the dangers of his own behavior, but notices that Bella does not recognize the danger he poses to her, instead claiming that she has the "wrong instincts." *Id.* at 196. Edward recognizes the Bella is careless with danger, and when she admits she knows he is vampire, he describes Bella: "Her reactions were always wrong—always completely wrong. She pulled danger toward herself. She invited it." *Id.* at 201. Edward says that her lack of fear was indicative of her "disturbing tendencies" and considered if Carlisle Cullen's medical connections would find her a therapist: "Perhaps something could be done to fix whatever was wrong with her, whatever [sic] it was that made her content to sit beside a vampire with her heart beating calmly and steadily." *Id.*

any time crush her,⁴² the reader too accepts that. When Bella accepts and even glamorizes that in the name of love, Edward follows her,⁴³ watches her sleep at night,⁴⁴ tails her car,⁴⁵ prevents her from using her car,⁴⁶ elicits his sister to keep her from going anywhere when he is not around,⁴⁷ repeatedly scares her,⁴⁸ and ultimately causes bodily harm to her,⁴⁹ the reader accepts that too. From Bella's view, when she finally experiences sex, violence and control are so intertwined with love, that she and the reader are manipulated into accepting them as a "normal" part of a relationship. Bella is unalarmed by these acts. In fact, Bella appears to relish in them,⁵⁰ and throughout the series, conflates love with acts of violence. Ultimately, Meyer's presentation of the story undercuts the argument that "it is just a fantasy."

This Article posits that although Bella Swan appears independent, confident, strong-willed, mature, and ready to face the world, she is actually dependent and insecure; she is uninformed and lacks judgment; she needs to be cared for, helped, protected, and rescued. These foibles leave her vulnerable to Edward's magical other world, and she is lured into his supernatural vampire reality where she believes she will be protected, loved, and in which all her foibles will be disappear. All she has to do is surrender to Edward, allow him to make her a vampire, and leave the human world. Like the sweep of a magic wand, she will drift into the happily ever after. Bella is "Cinderella⁵¹ of the supernatural." Edward is her "preternatural prince."

⁴² *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 248 ("My decision was made, made before I'd ever consciously chosen, and I was committed to seeing it through. Because there was nothing more terrifying to me, more excruciating, than the thought of turning away from him. It was an impossibility.").

⁴³ *Id.* at 174-95; *see infra* text accompanying notes 186-200; *see also infra* Part IV.A.

⁴⁴ *Id.* at 293; *see infra* text accompanying note 198.

⁴⁵ *Id.* at 174; *see infra* text accompanying note 190.

⁴⁶ *See infra* text accompanying note 195.

⁴⁷ *See infra* text accompanying note 196.

⁴⁸ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 175.

⁴⁹ *See TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 103, 284; *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 561; *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 89, 91, 95-96, 378-79; *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 83-84; *see also infra* Part IV.B.

⁵⁰ *See infra* text accompanying notes 238-54, and accompanying text.

⁵¹ JACOB GRIMM & WILHELM GRIMM, *Ashenputtel*, KINDER UND HAUSMÄRCHEN, 119-26 (1857). An English translation that remains close to the original tale is found in JACOB GRIMM & WILHELM GRIMM, *Cinderella*, GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES, 156-67 (Edna Henry Lee Turpin, ed. and trans., 1903). Much like Cinderella, Bella is a beautiful, dutiful daughter who cooks, cleans, and cares for her family. She meets a forbidden man, Edward, and they fall instantly in love. Edward is smart, charming, and incredibly wealthy. All the other girls desire to be with him, and the other girls (namely Bella's classmates, because Bella has no siblings) are jealous and wonder what hold Bella has over the "prince," Edward. Edward is enthralled by her and decides Bella is the one for him. He seeks her out over everyone else. Through their relationship, Bella gains wealth, power, and fashion sense. She starts to wear different clothes, which magically appear often, only in Twilight they come from Alice rather than the magical tree in the fairy tale or the Fairy Godmother of Disney's *Cinderella* film. Edward and Bella finally marry, and Bella moves to Edward's family's beautiful home, drives their expensive vehicles, and wears designer clothes. Her marriage brings her from rags to riches, and she and Edward are to live happily ever after. *See also*, Tanya Gold, *Twilight is not Feminist: It's Female Masochism*, THE GUARDIAN (Nov. 16, 2012, 4:30 PM), <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/nov>

This Article will first present a history of the Twilight saga, including information about the author and a brief synopsis of each of the four books. Thereafter, it will explore Bella's life circumstances and personal traits, showing her to be a victim rather than the strong, independent young woman she appears to be. Her decisions are undercut by specific traits from both her family background and personal characteristics that make her especially weak and which construct her as ideal prey for Edward's world, the perfect counterpoint to her current life. What Bella does not realize is the realities of the alluring vampire world do not free her, but constrain and even victimize her, giving her little choice in deciding who she will be.

In the next section, this Article will then show Bella as a victim from a legal perspective as well, specifically of stalking and domestic violence. However, she is incapable of recognizing these legal wrongs because she entangles love and sex with violence and control. Finally, the last part of this Article will conclude by suggesting unfortunate consequences of Bella's portrayal for Twilight readers and young women generally. This section will ultimately suggest that while preserving the joys of fantasy and fiction, there are alternative ways that Bella and her story could have been crafted. These alternatives would make Bella a better role model and a more deserving heroine, which would allow the Twilight saga to have a compelling role in preparing young women for the challenges of becoming independent in our increasingly complex and challenging world.

II. HISTORY AND SYNOPSIS OF TWILIGHT

A. History

On June 2, 2003, Stephenie Meyer had a vivid dream of a human who loved a vampire, and was immediately inspired to write their story.⁵² She wrote the entire first novel in three months, and the manuscript was accepted for publication within six months.⁵³ By November 2003, Meyer's transcript made its way to its future publisher, who read it on a cross-country flight.⁵⁴ The story entranced the publisher, who as soon as she landed, promptly called the then-unknown Meyer to buy the story, and *Twilight* was published on October 5, 2005.⁵⁵ Meyer was in her late-twenties and a stay-at-home mother of three young boys.⁵⁶ Meyer was an

/16/twilight-not-feminist-sado-masochism (observing the close connection to the themes in Twilight, fairy tales and "princess fiction").

⁵² Stephenie Meyer, *The Story Behind Twilight* (Oct. 5, 2005), <http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight.html>

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *Id.*; Lev Grossman & Bryan Alexander, *It's Twilight in America: The Vampire Saga*, TIME MAG. 52 (Nov. 23, 2009).

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ Meyer, *supra* note 52; Michael R. Walker, *A Teenage Tale With Bite*, BYU MAG. (Winter, 2007), <http://magazine.byu.edu/?act=view&a=1972>.

observant Mormon who lived in the Phoenix suburbs.⁵⁷ Before setting her books there, Meyer had never been to Washington State. She did not have literary ambitions and originally did not intend to try to publish *Twilight* after she had written it.⁵⁸ The Twilight franchise has been incredibly successful, and Meyer has since written other books and produced movies.⁵⁹ She was the bestselling author in the United States in 2008⁶⁰ and is considered a powerful celebrity.⁶¹

Meyer did not specifically intend to include her religious beliefs in the stories, but recognizes that her Mormon faith likely influenced her writing. Meyer has stated that “[u]nconsciously, I put a lot of my basic beliefs in the story.”⁶² Meyer says she does not intentionally include moral or social messages in her books, but instead writes stories she enjoys.⁶³ Meyer’s understanding of true love could underlie her stories: “To me, true love is that you would hurt yourself before you would hurt your partner, you would do anything to make them happy, even at your own expense, there’s nothing selfish about true love. It is not about what you want. It’s about what makes them happy.”⁶⁴ Meyer’s love story includes large

⁵⁷ Trachtenberg, *supra* note 10.

⁵⁸ Walker, *supra* note 56.

⁵⁹ In 2008, Meyer released an adult, science fiction novel called *The Host* and she says she has plans for sequels. She also has written a novella based on a Twilight character called, *The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner*, and contributed short stories to the collection called *Prom Nights from Hell*. In 2011, Meyer started her own film production company which produced the films from her books *Breaking Dawn, Part I*, *Breaking Dawn, Part II*, *The Host*, and adaptations from other books: *Austenland* and *Down a Dark Hall*. See Sara Vilkomerson, *Down a Dark Hall: What will be the Stephenie Meyer Effect?*, ENTMT. WKLY. (Apr. 19, 2012), popwatch.ew.com/2012/04/19/down-a-dark-hall-stephenie-meyer/. See also, *Projects*, FICKLE FISH FILMS, <http://www.ficklefishfilms.com/projects.html> (last visited Sept. 23, 2013); *About the Book*, THE HOST, <http://www.thehostnovel.com/> (last visited Sept. 24, 2013); STEPHENIE MEYER, THE SECOND SHORT LIFE OF BREE TANNER: AN ECLIPSE NOVELLA (2010); *Breaking Dawn Part I*, IMDB.COM, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1324999/fullcredits?ref=tt_ov_st_sm (last visited Sept. 24, 2013); *Breaking Dawn Part II*, IMDB.COM, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1673434/fullcredits?ref=tt_ov_st_sm (last visited Sept. 24, 2013); STEPHENIE MEYER ET AL., *PROM NIGHTS FROM HELL* (2007).

⁶⁰ See Bob Minzesheimer & Anthony DeBarros, *Sellers Basked in Stephenie Meyer’s ‘Twilight’ in 2008*, USA TODAY (Jan. 16, 2009), http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2009-01-14-top-sellers-main_N.htm (commenting that Meyer was the bestselling author in 2008 and was the first author to hold the top four spots on the USA Today’s 2008 Best-Selling Books list). Even in 2009, when Meyer did not release any new books, she sold almost as many books as in 2008. See Diane Roback, *The Reign Continues: YA Queen Stephenie Meyer Holds the Top Spots*, PUB. WKLY. (Mar. 22, 2010), <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-book-news/article/42533-childrens-best-sellers-2009-the-reign-continues.html>.

⁶¹ See *The World’s Most Powerful Celebrities*, FORBES (June 3, 2009) (where Meyer was named as number #26 on list of the 100 most powerful celebrities); see also *The Celebrity 100*, FORBES (June 28, 2010), http://www.forbes.com/lists/2010/53/celeb-100-10_The-Celebrity-100.html (noting that Stephenie Meyer is listed at #59 on the 2009 Forbes Celebrity 100 List. Observe also that the young movies actors, Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart, who became stars with Twilight, were also on the list.).

⁶² Steve Bary, “*Twilight*” Author’s Mormon Faith a Big Influence in Books, Film, THE ST. J. REG. (Nov. 23, 2008).

⁶³ Kira Cochrane, *Stephenie Meyer on Twilight, Feminism, and True Love*, THE GUARDIAN (Mar. 10, 2013), <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/mar/11/stephenie-meyer-twilight-the-host>.

⁶⁴ *Id.*

amounts of sexual tension, but without sexual acts outside of marriage.⁶⁵ Further, the characters are deeply concerned with the existence—or not—of souls and possibility for an afterlife,⁶⁶ which is a continuing tension between Bella, as a human, and Edward, as an immortal. Finally, the characters do not swear, smoke, or drink alcohol, adhering to the Mormon Word of Wisdom.⁶⁷ Instead of preaching a religious message, Meyer believes her books provide a message that anyone can determine his or her own fate regardless of that person's situation.⁶⁸

B. Synopses of the Books

*1. Twilight*⁶⁹

Seventeen-year-old Bella Swan moves to Forks, Washington, to live with her father, Charlie, upon the remarriage of her mother, Renee. When her parents were together, Bella lived with her parents in Forks, though Bella does not seem to have many memories of this time. Her parents divorced when she was young, and she had been living with her mother in Arizona since. Bella is a clumsy, quiet girl who likes to read classic novels.

When she starts at the local high school, Bella meets Edward Cullen in her junior year biology class. Edward turns out to be a vampire who lives in a coven, which Edward identifies as his “family” of other vampires who choose to live off animal blood rather than human blood. However, Bella proves a challenge to Edward's commitment to avoid killing humans because her scent is particularly attractive to him. Edward overcomes his reluctance to be with Bella and controls his urges to kill her because he loves her. Bella loves Edward, but she also develops a close friendship with Jacob Black, whom she knew as a young child before her parents divorced. Jacob is from a nearby Native American reservation whose people have a history of animosity with the vampires.

As Bella and Edward's relationship grows, Edward's perfect vampire family envelops Bella's world. While spending time with Edward's family, Bella encounters other vampires who still live on human blood, and after a minor scuffle,

⁶⁵ See Trachtenberg, *supra* note 10; see also Grossman, *supra* note 54, at 52 (in which the screenwriter for the Twilight films notes the yearning undertones of the books: “Nobody hooks up in *Twilight*. Meyer put sex underground, transmuted it back into yearning, where it became, paradoxically, exponentially more powerful. For me the appeal of the vampire is safe sexuality It's the ultimate romantic ideal. You have the allure of the danger. And yet there's only so far you can go.”)

⁶⁶ See Trachtenberg *supra* note 10.

⁶⁷ *The Doctrines and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, § 89, <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/89?lang=eng>. Mormons must comply with the Word of Wisdom to be baptized, participate in full-time mission work, and attend church schools and temples. The text of this doctrine restricts followers of the faith from using tobacco, drinking tea, wine and alcoholic beverages, narcotics, and encourages sparing meat consumption.

⁶⁸ See Grossman, *supra* note 11 (noting a major theme in Meyer's books is a “willingness to choose a different way in general,” and quoting Meyer as saying, “I really think that's the underlying metaphor of my vampires It doesn't matter where you're stuck in life or what you think you have to do; you can always choose something else. There is a different path . . .”)

⁶⁹ *TWILIGHT*, *supra*, note 2.

2014]

TWILIGHT

53

Bella becomes the prey of one of these vampires who forces her to return to Arizona for shelter, though in fact the vampire is using Bella as bait to kill Edward. The Cullens save Bella's life and kill the vampire when he attacks her.⁷⁰ Bella recovers from her injuries in an Arizona hospital with help from her mother and Edward. Bella lies to her parents about the source of her injuries.⁷¹ The book ends with Edward taking Bella to prom in Forks despite the cast she is still wearing on her leg from the attack.

2. New Moon⁷²

In an effort to be gallant and prevent further harm to Bella's life, Edward leaves Bella to entice her to move on with her life. Edward's abandonment leaves Bella emotionally and physically bereft. After months of wallowing in emptiness, Bella begins to recover, and at her father's urging, turns to her friendship with Jacob Black, who lives on a Native American reservation. They form an easy camaraderie, and Bella begins to go out and socialize instead of secluding herself at home and reeling in self-pity. Jacob introduces her to his family and other friends on the reservation, and they become her friends. Around this same time, Jacob discovers that he and some of his friends can phase into werewolves, the enemies of the vampires.

With her new friends, Bella engages in several adventurous and dangerous exploits, including motorcycle riding and cliff diving. In these reckless moments, she hears Edward's voice in her head giving advice and warnings. So Bella begins to seek dangerous situations in order to hear Edward's voice. Bella also encounters a dangerous vampire—whom she met in the previous book with the Cullens—and he informs her that a deadly vampire, Victoria, is hunting her because Edward killed her mate to save Bella's life in the first book.⁷³ Edward vowed to end his own existence if Bella died, and when he wrongly believes that a vampire killed Bella, he attempts to have himself killed in Italy by the ruling vampire family, the Volturi. Edward's vampire sister brings Bella to Italy to show Edward that Bella is actually alive to prevent Edward from ending his life.⁷⁴ Edward and his family

⁷⁰ *Id.* at 461 (when Bella asks what happened to James [the vampire who attacked her] Edward tells her that Emmett and Jasper "took care of him," implying that they killed him. He does not come back in later books, but his death is central to why Victoria [another vampire, James' lover] attempts to kill Bella in retaliation later in the series.).

⁷¹ *Id.* at 459, 462 (The Cullens lie to Renee, Bella's mom, by saying they came to Arizona to convince Bella to come back to Forks and that on Bella's way to their hotel room, she tripped down the stairs and fell down two flights of stairs and through a window. Bella's mom believes this story because Bella is consistently portrayed as accident prone and clumsy.).

⁷² *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2.

⁷³ *Id.* at 235-45 Bella sees another vampire who had previously been associated with Victoria and her lover, James. This vampire, Laurent, finds Bella when she is alone, and he tells her that Victoria sent him to find her because Victoria wants to kill her in revenge. However, Laurent is "thirsty" when he finds Bella and is going to kill her himself, but the werewolves show up and scare him away. This is the first time Bella sees the werewolves.).

⁷⁴ *Id.* at 419 (Bella says she will do anything to save Edward when Alice explains the situation.

return to Forks, and Bella and Edward resume their romantic relationship. They agree that they will be together for eternity and Edward will one day make Bella a vampire.⁷⁵

3. Eclipse⁷⁶

Edward's return created a rift in Bella's relationship with Jacob, who harbors romantic feelings for Bella. In spite of her father's and Jacob's aversion to the Cullens,⁷⁷ Bella centers her life around them. Bella struggles to balance her relationships with Edward and Jacob. On the one hand, Bella is sure that she and Edward are eternally bonded, but she deeply values her friendship with Jacob, although she knows that she is hurting him by remaining with Edward.

Edward and Charlie force Bella to consider college as she starts her senior year in high school. Several colleges accept Bella, but she plans to become a vampire instead. The bad vampire, Victoria, continues to hunt Bella and creates a dangerous army of out-of-control young vampires that leave a trail of carnage in their wake. Jacob and his pack of werewolves continue to serve as protectors for humans against the vampires, and like the Cullens, they want to end the bloodshed caused by the bad vampires. Despite their rivalry, the Cullens and the werewolves protect the humans and successfully confront the dangerous vampires. Jacob confesses his love for Bella, and though Bella acknowledges that she has feelings for Jacob, her love for Edward is stronger. Bella finally accepts Edward's proposal, and the two of them plan a wedding.

4. Breaking Dawn⁷⁸

Bella and Edward have a large formal wedding and go on their honeymoon at the Cullens' secret, private island. Edward is concerned about his ability to control his strength in his physical relationship with Bella, but she insists on sleeping with him while she is still human. Their first sexual experience occurs on the honeymoon. Edward had refused to have sex until marriage despite Bella's

Though Alice reminds Bella that it is dangerous for both of them if they go to Italy, Bella insists on going.).

⁷⁵ *Id.* at 540-42 (Edward and Bella decide they do not want to be apart. Bella wants to become a vampire and spend eternity with Edward, and she wants Edward to be one to turn her into a vampire. Edward tells Bella that he will personally turn her into a vampire, on the condition that she marry him. Bella does not initially want to get married (though she does not waiver in her commitment to Edward, only the institution of marriage). Edward does not "propose" and give Bella an engagement ring until *Eclipse*, and they have a wedding in the beginning of *Breaking Dawn*. However, Edward and Bella have committed to each other by the end of *New Moon*.).

⁷⁶ *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2.

⁷⁷ Though Bella's father, Charlie, does not know that Edward and his family are vampires, he does not particularly like Edward. He thinks that Bella spends too much time with Edward and would prefer that Bella choose Jacob. So, Charlie is averse to Edward being a boyfriend for Bella, but that is not rooted in Edward's vampire nature because Bella and the Cullens keep it a secret from Charlie throughout all four books, including after Bella becomes a vampire herself.

⁷⁸ *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1.

persistence otherwise. Due to Edward's superhuman strength, sexual intercourse with him is extremely violent: he demolishes the bedroom furniture and leaves Bella bruised and swollen from head to toe.

On their honeymoon, Bella becomes pregnant with Edward's child. The half-human, half-vampire baby is extremely strong and grows quickly. Because of its unique physical strength and needs, it seriously endangers Bella's life, placing her in frequent pain and rendering her without energy, strength, or ability to nourish herself adequately. Moreover, little information is available about the implications for the child's future, considering few vampires have had children with humans. Edward and his family encourage Bella to abort the child and save her life, but Bella refuses. Jacob stays with Bella during the difficult pregnancy, and they continue their close friendship. Bella's human body is destroyed delivering her child. At the moment of her death, Edward injects vampire venom into her heart to make Bella a vampire, and the transition puts Bella in excruciating pain.

Once transformed, Bella learns to live as a vampire, and she discovers she has the special power to be a "shield" for others and protect others from danger. Her special shield power also explains Bella's ability to rebuff other vampire's—including Edward's—attempts to read her mind, a power that some vampires have. Bella works to develop this gift to envelop those around her. Edward and Bella's daughter, Renesmee, has the gift to communicate with people through physical contact. The child grows quickly and develops a close relationship with Jacob, who "imprinted" on her when she is an infant. "Imprinting" is a trait of werewolves that determines the werewolves' fated soul mate by creating an unconditional bond, severing all other connections, and the imprinter will do anything to please and protect the chosen imprintee. The imprintee essentially has no choice; it is virtually impossible to reject imprinting.⁷⁹ Thus, from her infancy, it has been determined that Renesmee will be bonded as Jacob's mate forever. After Bella gets over the initial shock at Jacob's feelings for her daughter, Bella is glad that Jacob will care for and protect her daughter.

The existence of a young human-vampire child concerns the Volturi, the ruling Italian vampires, who previously declared that half-human, half-vampire offspring are not allowed. The Volturi set out to destroy the Cullens because they believe the Cullens have broken the rules and gained too much power in the vampire world. Other vampires take the Cullens' side and flock to Washington. The day of reckoning arrives, and the good vampires – as well as the werewolves—band together to face the Volturi. The Cullens diffuse the situation without violence, largely due to Bella's help as a "shield." Bella and the rest of the characters live happily ever after.

⁷⁹ *Id.* at 122-25. There is only one female werewolf in the band near Forks, Leah, and it is not clear that she can imprint. Only male werewolves imprint in Twilight.

III. BELLA IS CRAFTED TO BE A VICTIM OF HER OWN LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES AND OF EDWARD'S POWERFUL WORLD

Bella has been created to have life circumstances, personality, and physical traits that make her a stereotypical girl in need of rescue. At first blush, it appears to the reader that Bella's circumstances have made her strong-willed, independent, and capable of sound decisions. At the mere age of 17, she knows what she wants: to be Edward's wife; to become a vampire; and to live in the Cullens' secret world, giving up her "humanity" entirely, no matter the emotional or physical price, and even to face death as she knows it. Bella appears amazingly strong and ready to face her new world, regardless of the danger it poses. Indeed, to the casual reader and certainly to the impressible, naïve, young reader, Bella appears to be a modern day heroine.

A deeper look underneath this exterior, however, reveals the opposite is true. The circumstances that make Bella appear strong actually render her quite defenseless; produce foibles that cause her to need care, protection, and rescue; and disable her either to recognize or to assess adequately her own situation, so that she makes decisions from a position of weakness and vulnerability, rather than from a strong and informed point of view. In this way, Bella is victimized by her own life circumstances and is perfect prey to be allured by a magical world.

Not surprisingly, the author fashioned Edward and his world as the perfect counterpoint to Bella's own, filling every hole in Bella's life,⁸⁰ curing her foibles, making her woes vanish, and promising an enchanted new life. Edward, the man in her life, holds the "magic" to entice Bella, in the name of love, to take a dangerous journey into a "happily ever after." Bella gives herself completely to Edward's world, where she will become flawless.

But will this new vampire world actually free Bella from her weaknesses and imperfections? Unmasking the realities of Edward's world will question whether it holds a new life for Bella or whether it will constrain, control, and victimize her once again, merely in another—more glamorous—context, one painted with a "love-conquers-all" veneer enchanting both Bella and the reader.

A. Bella Is A Victim Of Her Own World

At only seventeen, Bella's upbringing has required her to make many decisions that children usually do not make for themselves. For example, Bella decided to leave her mother and move in with her father because "she" has decided

⁸⁰ *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 533 (Edward does not blame Bella for feeling something for Jacob when she kisses him, telling her, "There are holes in your life that I can't fill. I understand that." Bella replies, "There are no holes.") In this context Bella is implying that she feels even more horrible about feeling something for Jacob also, because she has no need for anything more than Edward, who is individually able to fill the holes in her life.

it is best for the family.⁸¹ Indeed much of the “story of Bella’s life” is predicated upon “her” “decisions.”⁸² Despite her youth, she has been making many decisions for much of her life and has played the role of “mature adult” and “caregiver” in her relationship to both her mother and father,⁸³ lending—what feels to her and looks to the reader like—confidence and maturity from the onset of the story. So, Bella appears to be remarkably strong.

However, a closer look at Bella will reveal that the opposite is true. Exploring the characteristics that stem from Bella’s family circumstances, personality, and physical traits will show that she was crafted to be filled with vulnerabilities, indeed the perfect “catch” to be seduced by a magical, supernatural world. Thus, Meyer establishes her as the ideal target to be allured by Edward.

1. Bella Is A Victim Of Her Family Life Circumstances

Bella’s family background is stereotypically unstable and as a result, she has been alone and isolated for almost all her life. She is the only child of divorced parents, both of whom are constructed to be quite inept as parents. Bella’s mother Renee has nurturing skills that are deficient at best. Indeed, Renee herself is in need of care and nurturing, which is yet another of Bella’s tasks.⁸⁴ Bella recognizes this and refers to herself as “the responsible one; the grown-up.”⁸⁵

Renee is also not a strong role model. She seems to lack ambition and appears to have been a bit flighty with her own interests and goals. Once Bella leaves for Forks, Renee leaves her job as a kindergarten teacher for a less stable job

⁸¹ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 4 (at the beginning of *Twilight*, Bella makes the decision to move to Forks, WA to live with her father even though she thinks of this act as exiling herself. Although Renee tells Bella she “doesn’t have to,” Bella perjures that she “wants to” make the move); *see also, id.* at 49 (Bella later confesses to Edward that she “sent [her]self” to live with Charlie so her mother could travel with her new husband, Phil, whom she was unhappily missing when he traveled and moved for his career.).

⁸² *Id.* at 49.

⁸³ *See infra* text accompanying notes 85-99.

⁸⁴ *See TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 33 (in her first correspondence with Bella after her move, Renee quickly turns her e-mail from one asking about Bella to an e-mail about herself and her needs instead, and she says she is packing for Florida and asks Bella where her pink blouse is, to which Bella can answer is at the cleaners and was supposed to have been picked up already); *see id.* at 35 (Bella considered Renee to be “an imaginative cook, and her experiments weren’t always edible”); *see id.* at 32 (Bella also did all the shopping for them, which is why she felt “normal” once inside the Forks supermarket); *see id.* at 106 (Renee even jokes that Bella was born thirty-five years old and just gets more middle-aged each year, to which Bella acknowledges her role with “someone has to be the adult.” Renee, on the other hand, is “very young for her age” and feels “even younger” with Phil.).

⁸⁵ *See ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 45; *see also TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 4 (Bella also decided to move to Forks to allow her mother and step-father space. Renee, her mother, allows Bella to move, but leaves Bella concerned for her “erratic, hare-brained mother to fend for herself;” she notes that her mom “had Phil now, so the bills would probably get paid, there would be food in the refrigerator, gas in her car, and someone to call when she got lost, but still.”).

as an elementary substitute teacher in Florida, so she can follow⁸⁶ her new, young husband who is seeking a career in minor-league baseball there.⁸⁷

Renee's lack of parenting and role modeling is also evident when Bella and Edward visit Renee and her husband in Florida.⁸⁸ Renee has no idea Edward is a vampire or that Bella plans to give up her "humanity"⁸⁹ to be with Edward eternally. To Renee, Bella is her teenage daughter bringing home her first boyfriend to meet her family. Bella is anxious, expecting that Renee will believe Bella is "too young" to make serious decisions regarding marriage, her future, or forgoing college.⁹⁰ Shockingly, however, Renee "knows" immediately that even at the age of seventeen, Bella has found her life's mate in Edward, who is barely older than Bella, and that it is just fine for her to get married so young, sacrifice college

⁸⁶ See *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 151.

⁸⁷ See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 466 (Renee's new husband, Phil, was a minor league baseball player, and he signed with the Suns in Jacksonville, Florida).

⁸⁸ Renee meets Edward for the first time at the end of *Twilight* when Bella is recovering from a vampire attack and the two of them are with her in the hospital. Bella is hospitalized with a "broken leg, four broken ribs, some cracks in [her] skull, bruises covering every inch of [her] skin, and [the loss of] a lot of blood." *Id.* at 260. Renee does not know this was caused by a vampire attack, because she was told that Bella's injuries were a result of her falling "down two flights of stairs and through a window." *Id.* at 459. When Renee first meets Edward, she is concerned about Bella's relationship with him. Renee tells Bella that Edward does seem to love her, but she is still young. Bella observes, "[h]er voice was unsure; as far as I could remember, this was the first time since I was eight that she'd come close to trying to sound like a parental authority." *Id.* at 467-68. Bella assures her mother that Edward is "just a crush" to which Renee quickly accepts and agrees with, ending the conversation. *Id.* at 468. Renee does not comment on Bella and Edward's relationship again until *Eclipse*. Bella and Edward take a weekend trip to Florida where Renee is surprisingly insightful into Bella and Edward's serious relationship. See *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 66-67. Renee senses the intensity of Bella and Edward's feelings, but when Renee attempts to express her concerns, she worries she is just "being silly." *Id.* at 68. Bella seems to long for her mother to act as a mother: "Renee was so easily swayed. Sometimes it was a good thing, because not all of her ideas were practical. But it *pained* me to see how quickly she caved in to my trivializing, especially since she was dead right this time." *Id.* at 68-69 (emphasis added).

⁸⁹ Renee cannot comprehend the full nature of Edward and Bella's relationship because Renee does not know that Edward is a vampire. Renee acknowledges that there is some part of Bella's relationship with Edward that she does not grasp, "I feel like I don't really understand your relationship. Like there's some secret I'm missing." *Id.* at 68. Bella's relationship with Edward forces Bella to keep secrets from her mother, which was a new element to their relationship: "Until now, there had never been a secret I [Bella] couldn't tell her [Renee]." *Id.*

⁹⁰ Bella feared telling her mother about her engagement even more than telling her father, Charlie, which is why Charlie relished in the thought of Bella having to explain the news to Renee. Bella knows her mother is not an advocate for her marriage: "The ultimate doom: telling Renee. Early marriage was higher up on her blacklist than boiling live puppies." *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 17. See also *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 541 (Bella notes, "I'm . . . afraid of Renee. She has some really intense opinions on getting married before you're thirty.").

and her “self” for marriage.⁹¹ Her mother unequivocally supports this with hardly a question.⁹²

Bella’s father Charlie is equally deficient when it comes to taking care of Bella, being a role model, and providing direction and advice. Charlie is rarely at home: he is either working or fishing.⁹³ When he is around, he spends most of his time alone in the living room, watching sports on television, and he lacks the skills to care for or nurture Bella.⁹⁴ Like Renee, Charlie needs more care and nurturing himself than he is able to provide for his daughter. From the time of her arrival in Forks,⁹⁵ Bella shops,⁹⁶ cooks,⁹⁷ and cleans for him.⁹⁸ Charlie also has trouble expressing himself and is insecure about how to parent or communicate with Bella.

⁹¹ Renee’s reaction to Bella’s engagement: “You’re not making my mistakes, Bella. You sound like you’re scared silly, and I’m guessing it’s because you’re afraid of *me* . . . Of what I’m going to think . . . But commitment was never your problem, sweetie. You have a better chance of making this work than most forty-year-olds I know . . . My little middle-aged child. Luckily, you seem to have found another old soul.” *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 18. Bella is confused by Renee’s quick acceptance: “But aren’t you going to say that I sound exactly like every other infatuated teenager since the dawn of time?” Renee’s opinion does not change: “You’ve never been a teenager, sweetie. You know what’s best for *you*.” *Id.* at 19.

⁹² When Bella, as a high-schooler, brings her boyfriend Edward to across the country to Florida to meet her mother and step-father, Renee never questions the seriousness of their relationship. Edward and Bella discuss the differences between Renee and Charlie: “[Bella:] Renee is so much more . . . *perceptive* than Charlie in some ways. It was making me jumpy.” Edward laughed. “Your mother has a very interesting mind. Almost childlike, but very insightful. She sees things differently than other people.”

Insightful. It was a good description of my mother—when she was paying attention. Most of the time Renee was so bewildered by her own life that she didn’t notice much else. But this weekend she’d been paying plenty of attention to me.” *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 66. Bella continues, later on the trip: “I wondered if Renee was about to give me a lecture on responsibility, too. I didn’t mind that the way I had with Charlie. It wasn’t embarrassing with my mom. After all, I’d been the one giving her that lecture time and time again in the last ten years.” *Id.* at 67. Again, Renee’s perceptiveness plagues Bella, “I’d forgotten how much my mother *saw*. Something about her simple view of the world cut through all the distractions and pierced right to the truth of things. This had never been a problem before. Until now, there had never been a secret I couldn’t tell her.” *Id.* at 68. Renee comes to Washington for Bella’s wedding, and then Renee only asks Bella: “Does he make you happy, Bella?” and “Are you ever going to want anyone else?” *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 19.

⁹³ *See, e.g., TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 11; *Id.* at 38 (Bella observes Charlie’s devotion to his job, “Charlie left first, off to the police station that was his wife and family.” Charlie leaves Bella home alone because Charlie often worked weekends); *Id.* at 132 (observing if Charlie was not working he was usually fishing).

⁹⁴ *Id.* at 35 (Charlie watching TV in the living room while Bella cooked dinner); *Id.* at 37 (after dinner Charlie back to the TV while she does dishes); *Id.* at 122 (Charlie is fine with dinner not being made yet since a baseball game was on); *see, e.g., NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 22 (Charlie does not care if Edward takes Bella out the night of her birthday—the first one she’s celebrating since moving back in with him—since there is a baseball game on).

⁹⁵ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 5.

⁹⁶ *Id.* at 32.

⁹⁷ *Id.* at 31.

⁹⁸ *See id.* (Charlie can not cook according to Bella who immediately takes over all domestic chores at the house); *see id.* at 32 (Bella shops for the groceries); *see id.* at 37 (Bella does the dishes after dinner); *see id.* at 38 (Bella cleans the house to fill her time); *see id.* at 149 (though it seems impossible to the reader, Charlie reminds Bella that he did fend for himself for the many years he lived alone).

As soon as Bella arrives in Forks, the reader can sense his inability to communicate; he even struggles to welcome her.⁹⁹

Perhaps the most disturbing event that shows Charlie's deficiencies as a father is when Jacob,¹⁰⁰ who loves Bella throughout most of the story, forcibly kisses Bella, and she breaks her hand hitting him.¹⁰¹ Rather than protecting or comforting Bella, Charlie conspicuously congratulates Jacob for his efforts,¹⁰² a shocking response from a father, not to mention one who is also a police chief. Bella hears Charlie's congratulations.¹⁰³ Charlie's reaction speaks volumes of the harmful messages it gives to his daughter.¹⁰⁴ More critically, his immediate failure to teach Bella that women should never be forced to kiss or be otherwise physical with any man can only encourage lack of self-respect and feelings of guilt, self-blame, and responsibility to "please others" and make them happy, all which permeate Bella's feelings during the entirety of the Twilight series.¹⁰⁵ Bella's home life circumstances make her appear to the reader as strong and capable, but in reality render her alone, helpless, and needy, stereotypically seeking all the care, protection, and direction she has never received.

2. Bella's Personality, Physical Traits, And Lack Of Interests Also Make Her A Victim

Beyond her isolating family life, Bella is also quiet and shy. She is uncomfortable in large social gatherings and can have a difficult time connecting with others or forming relationships. She does not like crowds or parties.¹⁰⁶ She

⁹⁹ *Id.* at 5 (Charlie gives Bella "an awkward one-armed hug" when she arrived).

¹⁰⁰ Jacob is the son of Charlie's old friend, and Jacob knew Bella from her prior trips to Washington when she came as a child. Jacob is a member of a local Quileute tribe. Jacob is a friend to Bella, and when Bella is struggling with Edward's departure, she turns to Jacob. Jacob eventually learns that he, and several of his friends, are actually werewolves, the natural enemy of the vampires. *See supra* text accompanying notes 69-72.

¹⁰¹ *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 330-31.

¹⁰² After Bella breaks her hand she and Jacob go into her house, where Charlie is excited to see Jacob with her. When Jacob tells Charlie that Bella broke her hand, Charlie sounds more amused than concerned and even laughs with Jacob when he explains that it happened when Bella hit him. Displaying more loyalty to Jacob than to his injured daughter, when Jacob tells Charlie that Bella hit him because he kissed her, Charlie shows no sign of the protective father one would expect from a police chief with one teenage daughter. Instead, he congratulates Jacob with, "Good for you, kid[.]" *Id.* at 336.

¹⁰³ *Id.*

¹⁰⁴ At the time of the incident, Charlie does not say anything directly to Bella about the incident until Edward is on his way over after the incident. Bella walks past Charlie, at which time he asks how her hand is, jokes she should pick on someone her own size. *Id.* at 338. When Bella asks about using her dad's baseball bat [against Jacob] Charlie replies, "Enough Bella." *See id.* at 339. Later, after graduation during a "heartfelt" conversation, Charlie indicates he feels guilty Bella has her hand injury, and within other joking remarks, tells her "if someone kisses you without your permission, you should be able to make your feelings clear without hurting yourself." *Id.* at 362-63.

¹⁰⁵ *See infra* text accompanying note 118.

¹⁰⁶ *See NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 12 (observing Bella does not like to be center of attention); *see id.* at 25 (Bella dreads going to her birthday party).

refuses to go to school dances.¹⁰⁷ She is physically plain. She prefers jeans, sneakers, and jackets to any other clothing.¹⁰⁸ She has no interest in make-up or fixing her hair.¹⁰⁹ The reader justifiably believes that all this is attributable to independence and individuality. Indeed these traits certainly could have been developed to lead to that conclusion throughout the book. But instead, Meyer uses these traits to exhibit Bella's insecurity, her lack of self-confidence, and her belief that she is not worthy of attention, especially from boys.¹¹⁰

These characteristics are moreover used to support the need to "rescue" Bella—once rescued and under Edward's control, Bella paradoxically acquires the very conventions she has seemingly rejected; she is molded to be conventionally and stereotypically feminine and beautiful: made-up, coiffed, adorned in dresses and the latest fashion.

Bella is also constructed to be awkward, clumsy and uncoordinated.¹¹¹ In fact, her clumsiness often makes her the subject of ridicule, particularly by Charlie and Edward.¹¹² It also causes her multiple injuries, which get her into further trouble.¹¹³ By making Bella clumsy and prone to injury in contexts where she interacts with others, Meyer provides another basis for the reader to accept quite

¹⁰⁷ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 81 (after Charlie asks if Bella is going to the Spring Dance she replies, "No—I don't dance, Dad."). Bella only goes to prom at the end of *Twilight* because Edward makes her. *Id.* at 484.

¹⁰⁸ *Id.* at 140 (Bella wears jeans and a t-shirt, but implies that if she were going outside, she would only adding a layer of her "default" jacket); *see also ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 36 (Bella observes, "Alice was scrutinizing my boring jeans-and-a-t-shirt outfit in a way that made me self-conscious . . . My indifferent attitude to fashion was a constant thorn in her side.").

¹⁰⁹ There is sparse mention of Bella's disinterest in fashion throughout *Twilight*. In fact, not until the nervous anticipation of meeting all of the Cullens at their home, does Bella express concern over her physical appearance. *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 252.

¹¹⁰ Bella is surprised by the attention that she receives from young men in Forks. She wonders if it stems from her novelty in this small town, with her "crippling clumsiness [is] seen as endearing rather than pathetic, casting [her] as a damsel in distress." *Id.* at 55. She also thinks she is stupid for wanting to see Edward at school because she "was well aware that [her] league and his league were spheres that did not touch." *Id.* at 54. Analyzing Edward's fascination with her, "I couldn't imagine anything about me that could be in any way interesting to him." *Id.* at 228.

¹¹¹ *See, e.g., TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 116 (Bella remembers many falls she took as a child. At the beach she would fall into the tide pools, and her dad had to pull her out); *see id.* at 117 (Bella was cognizant of her past clumsiness when she fell while out with her new friends in Forks, sustaining palm scrapes on her hands and grass stains on the knees of her jeans).

¹¹² *See, e.g., TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 58 (Charlie laughed at the idea of Bella playing baseball); *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 88-89 (Edward jokes that Bella has "bad luck" and could not fly cross country without bringing a plane down); *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 364 (Edward could not help but laugh at her when she falls off his back after running her to the baseball game); *Id.* at 328 (Edward jokes when Bella finally shows a reaction to vampire talk, "I was beginning to think you had no sense of self-preservation at all."); *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 342 (After Bella hurts her hand punching Jacob, Emmett jokes "Fall down again, Bella?") (Note that in the movie his joke is harsher; he says "Trying to walk and chew gum at the same time again, Bella?").

¹¹³ *See TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 95 (on one occasion, Bella must be taken to the nurse because she has fainted during a blood type-sampling experiment). *See also NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 28-29 (when the Cullens throw her a birthday party, Bella gets a bloody paper cut as she clumsily unwraps a gift, and the vampires rush to attack her. Bella responds by falling over, and further injuring herself so she ends up needing stitches).

readily, even if subliminally, that Bella needs to be watched, protected, and rescued. Bella even calls herself a “damsel in distress.”¹¹⁴

Crafted by Meyer to lack nurturing and to be socially and physically awkward, it is no wonder Bella’s actions and self-perceptions are dominated by overriding guilt. The books are filled with such examples, all of which are emotionally painful for Bella, often accompanied by self-doubt, self-loathing, anguish, and tears.¹¹⁵ Bella feels guilty when she cannot reciprocate feelings toward others. She repeatedly feels guilty about not reciprocating Jacob’s intense feelings.¹¹⁶ Simultaneously, she feels guilty for her inability to let go of Jacob or whatever relationship she has with him.¹¹⁷ She feels guilty as well when she fails to “make others happy.”¹¹⁸ She even feels guilty about things that are not her fault, for example, that a vampire is hunting her¹¹⁹ and that Jacob decides to show up at her wedding.¹²⁰

Bella is also filled with self-blame. She blames herself and takes responsibility for the actions of others. For example, when Jacob apologizes to her for coming between her and Edward, she blames herself for that.¹²¹ When Edward feels bad for not protecting her, she takes the blame for that too.¹²² Feeling bad about many of these events naturally shows how deeply Bella cares about others. But the intensity and pervasiveness of her guilt and self-blame, together with the need to be responsible for the happiness of others contradicts the self-assured, confident Bella, raises doubts about Bella’s true emotional maturity, and exacerbates her vulnerabilities. Notably, Edward justifies Bella’s guilty feelings as

¹¹⁴ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 55.

¹¹⁵ *See, e.g., TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 411; *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 272, 368, *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 17, 419, 517, 595.

¹¹⁶ *See, e.g., ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 517 (when Edward hurts Jacob by telling him of Bella’s engagement, Bella says, “A new sob broke from my chest. I was hurting everyone today. Was there anything I touched that didn’t get spoiled?”); *Id.* at 379, 517, 593 (Bella describing herself as “selfish,” and berating herself for “hurting” those she loved); *Id.* at 528 (Bella berating herself after she kisses Jacob: “I loved him, much more than I should, and yet, still nowhere near enough. I was in love with him, but it was not enough to change anything; it was only enough to hurt us both more. To hurt him worse than I ever had. I didn’t care about more than that—than his pain. I more than deserved whatever pain this caused me. I hoped it was bad. I hoped I would really suffer”).

¹¹⁷ *See, e.g., NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 271; *see, e.g., ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 515, 517, 528; *see, e.g., BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 68.

¹¹⁸ *See, e.g., ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 55 (Bella wins an argument with Charlie and feels guilty that he may not like the result). *Id.* at 469, 617 (She does not want a big wedding but guiltily agrees to make Alice happy).

¹¹⁹ *See TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 411 (Bella feels guilty that a vampire, James, hunted (and almost killed) her).

¹²⁰ *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 68.

¹²¹ *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 595-97.

¹²² *See, e.g., NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 506-07; *see also ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 33 (“[Edward] had only been trying to save me when he’d left, save my soul. I don’t hold him responsible for all the stupid things I’d done in his absence, or the pain I had suffered.” [Bella to Edward:] “You were just trying to do the right thing. And I’m sure it would have worked with anyone less mental than me. Besides, you’re here now. That’s the part that matters”).

being “only human,” thus foreshadowing, as well as subtly alluring, Bella’s entrance to his world, where guilt and self-blame will diminish, if not disappear.¹²³

Bella also has no interests. There are several references in the books that Bella has strong intellectual capabilities. She is in advanced classes,¹²⁴ does well in school,¹²⁵ and was accepted into colleges.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, she never expresses interest in what she “wants to be” or in pursuing any interests or career. There is no indication Bella has ambitions beyond high school, except to be with Edward. She steadfastly wants to become a vampire and enter the Cullens’ supernatural world. Bella’s lack of direction merely augments her need for rescue and her position as ideal prey to be wooed by Edward and his world.

B. Bella Is Allured By Edward And His World Because They Will Magically Transform Her and Her Life.

A close look at Edward’s world will reveal it to be the mirror image of Bella’s world, containing perfect counterpoints. Each weakness will disappear, and Bella will have all that she does not, and she will be all that she has never been.

1. In Edward’s World, Bella Will No Longer Be Alone, And She Will Have Instantaneous Family, Friends, And A Social Group To Which She Belongs.

As Bella begins to spend more time with Edward and the Cullens, Bella recognizes their perfect family unit. The members of the Cullen family live together eternally, and Carlisle and Esme are perfect parents. Their marriage appears to be quite solid.¹²⁷ Carlisle is an accomplished doctor in the human world;¹²⁸ he is patient and understanding with all of his children¹²⁹ and has strong role modeling and parenting skills.¹³⁰ Esme is likewise a skilled and loving parent.¹³¹

¹²³ *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 430 (Bella says, “I cringed at the dim memory of shame and guilt. It seemed odd now that I needed him [Jacob] so much then. That sense of absence without him near had vanished; it must have been a human weakness.”).

¹²⁴ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 47 (Bella was in an advanced placement program in Arizona).

¹²⁵ See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 45 (Bella: “I’d already done this lab, and I knew what I was looking for. It should be easy.”); *Id.* at 51 (while other partners struggled with the lab, “[Bella] didn’t have any trouble with it”); *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 95 (“[Bella’s] grades were perfect.”).

¹²⁶ *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 15-16 (University of Alaska Southeast); *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 225 (Dartmouth).

¹²⁷ See *MIDNIGHT SUN*, *supra* note 41, at 108 (Edward observes, “More than eighty years had passed since Carlisle had found Esme, and yet he still looked at her with those incredulous eyes of first love. It would always be that way for them.”).

¹²⁸ See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 62.

¹²⁹ See *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 20 (Edward tells Charlie that Carlisle supports whatever decision he makes regarding his possible attendance at an Ivy League school); *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 343 (Edward explains that there was time during his vampire-life that he lived apart from Carlisle and Esme and hunted humans, but when he returned to them a few years later wanting to recommit to Carlisle’s unorthodox ways, they welcomed him back unconditionally.).

¹³⁰ See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 288 (Edward notes that Carlisle is the most compassionate and humane vampire in history, and Edward’s voice shows that he strongly respects his father figure); *see id.*

Beyond their parenting, Carlisle and Esme provide Bella a home life unlike her own. They live in a beautiful house,¹³² which always appears to be immaculate and sparkling.¹³³ Notably, because the Cullens are vampires and do not sleep or eat food, there is no shopping to do, no cooking to prepare, no beds to be made, no dishes or sheets to wash. The Cullens' world does not require any of the housekeeping for which Bella has been responsible for most of her life as a human.

Further, the Cullens are extremely wealthy and able to provide unlimited luxury. Besides their home in the woods where they live outside of Forks,¹³⁴ they also own an island.¹³⁵ They have expensive cars,¹³⁶ a large piano,¹³⁷ and an enormous music collection.¹³⁸ Alice Cullen is obsessed with fashion, owns a magnificent wardrobe, and is always dressing in the latest fashion. All the women in the Cullen clan have outstanding make-up and hairstyles.¹³⁹ The Cullen men also have a sense of style that exudes wealth and prominence.¹⁴⁰

Beyond their material possessions and perfect looks, however, Bella primarily sees the Cullens as a source of virtually boundless support and protection. Because of their shared secret nature as vampires, the Cullens are specially bonded. Hence, the Cullens not only care for each other, but understand each other's

at 340 (As a skilled doctor with such practiced self-restraint, Carlisle is able to work in the hospital, saving lives, which is what he loves); see *id.* at 307 (Carlisle is compassionate).

¹³¹ See *id.* at 326, 368 (Esme was concerned Edward had been unhappy with his single life); *id.* at 368 (Esme has strong motherly instincts and thinks of her adopted children as her own); *id.* at 368 (She tells Bella that she referees the baseball games because she likes to keep everyone honest); *id.* at 307 (Esme loves passionately).

¹³² *Id.* at 321-22.

¹³³ See *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 529.

¹³⁴ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 320-21.

¹³⁵ *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 78 (The island is off the South American coast, and Bella and Edward honeymoon there).

¹³⁶ Edward's car: ("The nicest car here was a shiny Volvo, and it stood out." *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 14). Rosalie's car: ("[Students] circled around Rosalie's red [BMW M3] convertible, [with] unmistakable lust in their eyes." *Id.* at 223). Emmett's car: (Bella: "[It] was a monster Jeep. Its tires were higher than my waist. There were metal guards over the headlights and taillights, and four large spotlights attached to the crash bar. The hardtop was shiny red." *Id.* at 359). Carlisle's car: ("It was a Mercedes S55 AMG. I knew the horsepower and the color of the interior. I knew the feel of the powerful engine purring through the frame. I knew the rich smell of the leather seats and the way the extra-dark tint made noon like dusk through those windows." *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 378). Alice's car: (Edward bribed Alice to keep Bella from visiting Jacob whenever he was out of town by giving her "a shiny canary yellow Porsche" like the one she had stolen in Italy. *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 145-46).

¹³⁷ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 324 (Bella had always wanted to give her mother a baby grand piano like the one the Cullens had).

¹³⁸ *Id.* at 343-44; *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 366.

¹³⁹ See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 18 ([Rosalie's] hair was golden, gently waving to the middle of her back [Alice's] hair was a deep black, cropped short and pointing in every direction); *Id.* at 19 ("They were faces you never expected to see except perhaps on the airbrushed pages of a fashion magazine."). *Id.* at 322-23 ("[Esme] had the same pale, beautiful features as the rest of them. Something about her heart-shaped face, her billows of soft, caramel colored hair reminded me of the ingénues of the silent-movie era. She was small, slender, yet less angular, more rounded than the others It was like meeting a fairy tale - Snow White, in the flesh.").

¹⁴⁰ See *id.* at 32 ("[I]t was obvious that they were all dressed exceptionally well; simply, but in clothes that subtly hinted at designer origins.").

moods,¹⁴¹ communicate well with each other,¹⁴² and even more appealing, they enjoy each other's company and often do things together. Alice almost immediately becomes Bella's best friend, offering her sisterly friendship, including advice about how to behave and what to wear.¹⁴³ The Cullen clan—their wealth, their luxuries, and most importantly the family bond and friendship they offer Bella—is thus the first counterpoint to Bella's life, which has been substantially deprived of any family and friends.

2. In Edward's World, Bella Will Be Graceful, Agile, Coordinated, And Beautiful; She Will Have Purpose And Be Freed From Painful Human Emotions.

As Bella and Edward's relationship develops, she naturally learns about vampires' nature, including their physical attributes. She learns that Edward, like all vampires, has marble-like impenetrable skin that glitters in sunlight.¹⁴⁴ Like all vampires, he also possesses exceptional, in fact quite dangerous, power.¹⁴⁵ He has razor sharp teeth¹⁴⁶ and extraordinary muscle mass, giving him excessive strength, flexibility, and supernatural speed.¹⁴⁷ Vampires have extremely acute senses and are unnaturally aware of their surroundings and protect themselves quite astonishingly. Becoming a vampire will guarantee that Bella, too, possess these superhuman characteristics.

Indeed Bella begins to change just by spending time with Edward, even before she becomes a vampire. As Bella immerses herself in Edward's world, miraculously, she begins to look better and be a bit more coordinated. The more she is with Edward, the more confident she becomes,¹⁴⁸ In Edward's world, Bella

¹⁴¹ See, e.g., *Id.* at 324 (Jasper has the power to control the emotions of those around him so he often creates a calming mood like the one he established when Bella first came to the Cullen house); *Id.* at 326-27 (the Cullens provide Edward and Bella privacy; Edward explains Emmett and Rosalie struggle to support Edward and Bella's relationship, but Edward recognizes their feelings and understands; Edward also understands Jasper's difficulties being in close proximity to a human).

¹⁴² See *id.* at 316 (Edward tells Bella that his family already knows she is coming and that they "don't have secrets in the family. It's not really feasible, what with [his] mindreading and Alice seeing the future and all that."); see also *id.* at 336 (Especially with Edward's mindreading, family members do not even have to speak aloud to communicate with him. Bella found it "unsettling" to know that the only reason Carlisle spoke aloud of his plans was for her benefit, since Edward already knew the instant Carlisle knew).

¹⁴³ See e.g., *id.* at 323 (Alice was the first family member to "approve of [Bella] so entirely" at the onset of the relationship). See generally, *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 36 (Alice would love to give Bella a makeover and play dress-up); *Id.* at 147 (Alice enjoys having a "sleepover" with a pedicure included for Bella); *id.* at 351 (Alice buys Bella a new outfit for graduation); *id.* at 614 (Alice plays the role of Bella's wedding planner, dress designer, and only bridesmaid); *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 43-44 (Alice perfects Bella's wedding hair and make-up); *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 413 (Bella acknowledges her friendship with Alice early in their relationship: "And we were friends now, somehow—as she must have know we would be all along."); *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 465 ([Alice]: "I love you like you were my own sister." [Bella]: "To me, Alice, you are my sister.").

¹⁴⁴ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 260.

¹⁴⁵ *Id.* at 264.

¹⁴⁶ *Id.* at 131.

¹⁴⁷ *Id.* at 364, 367.

¹⁴⁸ *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 533 (Bella says, "this was *my* meeting"). After her transformation

will increasingly wear beautiful clothes, all chosen by Alice, of course. She carries herself with newfound elegance, grace, and aplomb. She is beautiful. Edward and his world have the power to change her—indeed they have already begun to do so, providing again a counterpoint to her current physical appearance and clumsiness. These changes will be even more resplendent once she becomes a vampire.¹⁴⁹

In Bella's world, she had no purpose or direction.¹⁵⁰ An identity as Edward's wife and a member of the Cullen coven, she will have purpose and even acquire powers like other vampires. Some can move—fly—miles in minutes,¹⁵¹ and possess extraordinary strength. Some can read minds;¹⁵² some can tell the future;¹⁵³ some can track both humans and inanimate objects, using supernatural powers.¹⁵⁴ Bella will be given powers too. She will have a purpose to fulfill.

Edward's supernatural world will also free Bella of human emotion: no more fear, guilt, anguish or panic; she will view herself as an asset, not a liability.¹⁵⁵ Bella's purpose/role as Edward's wife in Edward's world provide even more critical counterpoints to her prior life.¹⁵⁶

*C. Unveiling The Realities Of The Vampire World Reveal Bella To Be A Victim
There Too: Preyed Upon, Defined, Controlled, And Dominated*

Through Bella's eyes, the vampire world is unquestionably enticing. However, a closer look shows the realities of the vampire world have been veiled by the glamour, which has not merely captivated Bella, but has manipulated her and the reader. In reality, Bella has been "preyed upon." Her identity is defined by the vampire world; and she has been given her powers by her vampire husband, who has violently injected his venom into her. She is, for the most part, controlled by the vampire society, which notably is governed predominately by its male

to being a vampire, Bella becomes even more brazen. See, *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 430 ("'Edward!' I hissed, yanking him to a stop (and feeling a little thrill of smugness that I was able to do it). 'How can you say that?'").

¹⁴⁹ See *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 639-40 (A man describing Bella says: "'She looks like . . .' His eyes ran from my face to my shoes appreciatively. 'Well, she looks like a freaking super model, that's what she looks like Rocking body, pale as a sheet, dark brown hair almost to her waist, need's a good night sleep.'").

¹⁵⁰ See *supra* text accompanying notes 124-27.

¹⁵¹ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 279-80.

¹⁵² *Id.* at 180 (Edward can read minds but not all vampires can); *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 469 (Aro, a vampire with the Volturi, can also read minds but only through physical contact with the person).

¹⁵³ See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 290 (Alice can foresee the future).

¹⁵⁴ See *id.* at 397, 400 (James is a "tracker," which explains his ability to find Bella though she is hiding thousands of miles away).

¹⁵⁵ Bella is overridden with guilt throughout the saga. See *supra* text accompanying notes 115-23. Fed up with the of guilt and anguish of the human world, she concludes that she is ready to join Edward and his world, one in which she would never let such emotions get in the way again. *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 435.

¹⁵⁶ Bella tells the reader, "I cringed at the dim memory of shame and guilt." *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 430.

2014]

TWILIGHT

67

members. Bella has been wooed by the glamour of eternal love, failing to recognize these veiled, unfortunate realities.

1. The Vampire World Causes Bella To “Fall Prey” To Edward, - Just As Humans Are Supposed To Do.

Edward and Bella have an irresistible attraction to each other. But because the Cullens have committed not to eat humans, Bella and the reader believe Edward is not preying upon or hunting her.¹⁵⁷ Rather, Edward’s attraction is due solely to true love. Bella also believes that her overpowering attraction to Edward is likewise grounded in true love, rather than his characteristically-vampire exquisite looks,¹⁵⁸ attractive smell,¹⁵⁹ and captivating voice.¹⁶⁰

Notwithstanding any possibility of “true love,” Edward is nonetheless a vampire. The mere fact that he is committed not to feed on her, or any other human, does not magically negate his desire for her blood. Moreover, his very nature, formulated for the precise purpose of alluring humans, draws Bella to him, as all humans are supposed to be drawn to vampires’ irresistibly seductive looks, smell, and voice. But Bella’s belief—and likewise the readers’—that Edward is not specifically “hunting” her and does not want to hurt her obscures the reality that Edward may not entirely be overcoming his vampire nature and indeed may be preying upon her, even if subconsciously. It is easy to forget Edward is a vampire because he is wholly integrated into Bella’s own typical small town neighborhood, in her school, and among her friends and relatives.¹⁶¹ Edward’s “vampireness” is thus obfuscated.

So, how can the reader be sure Bella found real love, rather than merely reacting to Edward as human prey is supposed to react to a vampire? There is no objective way to be sure, and that is precisely what books and movies lead us to believe love is all about: there is no objectivity to it; you just “feel it” and “know it,” when it exists. It is the sheer delight of this “true love” that keeps at bay Edward’s vampire desire to hunt Bella.

2. The Vampire World Of “Secrecy” Will Keep Bella Isolated.

Another reality of the vampire world – its secrecy—is also clouded by the excitement and glamour that overtake Bella. The Cullens secretly possess magical

¹⁵⁷ See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 186-87 (The Cullens do not hunt people); *Id.* at 264 (“I swear not to hurt you.”).

¹⁵⁸ See *id.* at 413 (attractiveness is one of the tools in a vampire’s lethal arsenal); *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 194 (most vampires are beautiful as the Cullens); *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 19 (Edward is especially attractive).

¹⁵⁹ See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 263 (“I smelled his cool breath in my face. Sweet, delicious, the scent made by mouth water. It was unlike anything else. Instinctively, unthinkingly, I leaned closer, inhaling.”).

¹⁶⁰ See *id.* at 264 (“[H]is velvet voice unintentionally seductive.”).

¹⁶¹ See *supra* text accompanying notes 31-34.

powers and supernatural strength¹⁶² and are involved in a secret rivalry with Jacob Black, and certain other members of his Native American tribe.¹⁶³ These particular members of his tribe can secretly phase into werewolves and do so when they get angry, and this enables them to fight.¹⁶⁴ Bella is entrusted with all these secrets and cannot even tell her parents.¹⁶⁵ Perhaps the most important secret of all is that Bella is to become a vampire.¹⁶⁶ Bella cannot see the consequences of these secrets. While she certainly realizes how difficult it will be to give up her family, she cannot see that the secrecy in her new world will isolate her no less than her previous life circumstances did, only this time in a new, extraordinary, and luxurious environment.

3. The Vampire World Will Maintain Bella's Attraction To Domineering Men Who Offer Her Protection, Strength, And Power But Exert Control Over Her.

Bella's weaknesses explain why she is attracted to both Edward and Jacob. Both offer her protection and strength, which are novel to her. These men are attractive to Bella because they embody stereotypically male traits of power and strength and offer her the security she has never known. Not surprisingly, these character traits are precisely ones which Bella herself also lacks. Moreover, both Edward and Jacob use these typically male traits of strength and decisiveness to dote on Bella, watch over her, care for her, and rescue her from harm.¹⁶⁷

Besides his glittering good looks, wealth, and luxurious lifestyle, Edward offers something to Bella that Jacob cannot. He offers her transformation. Edward is a male who has the power to offer Bella a way out of her own skin, her current world, and all its anguish. This power reinforces her attraction to domineering men to whom she looks, rather than inside herself, as perhaps the only way to surmount her current life's challenges. Edward is able to change Bella herself and the very world in which she will exist forever. Bella cannot resist this power.

Hidden underneath the veil of Edward's protection and the anticipation of the power he can provide lies control by a domineering and powerful man and his world. The control is masked by the thrill, glamour, and excitement Bella experiences. Edward and his family actually decide many things for Bella during

¹⁶² See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 290, 307, 413.

¹⁶³ *Id.* at 124-26.

¹⁶⁴ See *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 293 (Some members of the Quileute tribe can shape-shift into werewolves); see also *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 244-45.

¹⁶⁵ See *supra* text accompanying notes 89.

¹⁶⁶ See *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 25.

¹⁶⁷ See *supra* text accompanying note where Bella experiences an attraction to an unknown presence; see also *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 309 (Jacob describing werewolves as "protectors"); *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 212-13 (when Jacob puts himself in danger to protect Bella, and when Bella expresses concern he disregards her concerns, implying his strength and power keep him out of danger); *id.* at 227, emphasis in the original (When Bella is in danger, Edward tells her, "I don't know [why another vampire is hunting her]. But, Bella, I swear I *will* find out. I will." Bella accepts his promise of protection: "'I know you will,' I said, laying my head against his chest").

her human life. Alice begins to pick out her clothes;¹⁶⁸ the Cullens decide where and how her birthday, wedding, and honeymoon will be celebrated.¹⁶⁹ Edward decides when and if she can see Jacob.¹⁷⁰ Edward gets angry when Bella does not behave as he would like.¹⁷¹ Edward appears in her car,¹⁷² in front of her home,¹⁷³ and in her bedroom.¹⁷⁴ But this all seems quite logical to Bella—and the reader—because Edward loves her, and his world must remain a secret.

As their relationship intensifies, Edward even decides when and if he and Bella can have sex, making fun of her human hormones and impatience, while he is able to remain aloof and in control—at least before they are married.¹⁷⁵ He uses sex as a bargaining chip in their relationship, for marriage and for becoming a vampire.¹⁷⁶ All this behavior and all these decisions are made ostensibly to protect Bella and out of concern and undying love for her. Under all these circumstances, is Bella being solely protected and loved or is she being molded, if not controlled, by a domineering male?¹⁷⁷

Even after becoming a vampire, the vampire world controls. Although Bella becomes the strongest and the protector, indeed the “shield” for all of them,¹⁷⁸ this role is not as empowering as it seems. After all, she gains her power only through giving up her human life, becoming a part of Edward’s vampire existence, submitting to his ways, and devoting herself to Edward as well as the conventions of his secret world. She obtains her power through what her man gives her.

¹⁶⁸ See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 482; see also text accompanying note 143.

¹⁶⁹ See *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 25; see *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 48; see *supra* note 135 and accompanying text.

¹⁷⁰ See e.g., *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 145-50.

¹⁷¹ See *id.* at 115 (Bella dreads the trouble she is going to be in after spending time with Jacob, telling him, “[Edward] really hates it when I do things he considers . . . risky.”).

¹⁷² See *id.* at 361

¹⁷³ See *infra* text accompanying notes 197-98.

¹⁷⁴ See *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 292-93; see *infra* text accompanying notes 199-200.

¹⁷⁵ See *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 186-90. Notable here is the contrast between the Bella Meyer has crafted to be ostensibly mature enough to decide to give up both her humanity and her family with the Bella who is not mature enough to decide when to have sex. When it comes to that decision, Bella is infantilized and is not given any autonomy to decide this on her own. Rather, it is Edward, her male partner, who decides for her.

¹⁷⁶ See *id.* at 619.

¹⁷⁷ There is one decision Bella appears to make completely on her own-- despite serious objections. This is the decision to give birth of Renesmee though by doing so, Bella’s own life will be threatened. Edward and others challenge her decision but Bella remains steadfast. Close analysis will show that this decision is not without considerable vampire influence on Bella as to whom she should become. By the time she makes this decision it is well into the fourth and final book. She has already relinquished herself to the vampire society. She has married a vampire, is close to becoming a vampire herself, and the baby she is carrying is half-vampire, too. Part of Bella’s transformation to the vampire world is to finally have the confidence to make a stand for the something of her own. Her exposure to the vampire world and the purpose it gives her is a critical influence on her decision. In spite of Edward’s personal viewpoint it would be erroneous to conclude that Bella’s decision was completely independent and without influence by the controlling vampire world she has been enticed by for the preceding 1828 pages, which span over two years of Bella’s short life. See *BREAKING DAWN* *supra* note 1, at 180, 447.

¹⁷⁸ See *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 420, 430.

Looking at Bella from within the vampire world at the very least raises questions as to whether Bella made autonomous decisions when she gave her life to Edward and became a vampire. On the surface, it appears that she has fallen in love with Edward and made the decision on her own, but close reading suggests that in some way Bella has been prey, just as humans are supposed to be, for vampires. Instead of freeing Bella, the vampire world isolates her through its inherent secrecy; instead of being able to identify her own values, desires, and ability to make meaningful choices, Bella and her choices are defined by the Cullens and the vampire society; and Bella's empowerment is in actuality not personal empowerment at all, but simply a benefit bestowed upon her after relinquishing her prior life and committing herself to a husband and his vampire society. Ultimately, Bella is more controlled by a domineering man—and is more victim than heroine—than both she and the reader realize.

IV. BELLA IS A VICTIM OF ILLEGAL ACTS

The allure of the vampire world also masks the illegal acts that have been committed against Bella. Bella's fans perceive her as a heroine because in the name of love, she decides to sacrifice her humanity and become a vampire. In so doing, Bella dedicates her life to her soul mate, Edward, and his world. Like Bella, her fans are swept away by fairytale fog and allured by a narrow lens of love and glamour, which does not focus on the entire landscape of Bella's experiences. Bella and the reader are manipulated into believing that love justifies all, even isolation, fear, and injury. Opening the lens will show that Bella is more victim than heroine—legally, of stalking and domestic violence.

A. Bella Is a Victim of Stalking

Under Washington state law¹⁷⁹ a person commits the crime of stalking¹⁸⁰ if, without lawful authority:

- (a) He or she intentionally and repeatedly¹⁸¹ harasses¹⁸² or repeatedly follows¹⁸³ another person and

¹⁷⁹ Because the book takes place in the state of Washington, Washington state law will be used to explore the crimes of stalking and domestic violence.

¹⁸⁰ WASH. REV. CODE ANN. § 9A.46.110 (West 2013).

¹⁸¹ WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.46.110(6)(e) defines "repeatedly" as "two or more separate occasions." These separate occasions must be "distinct, individual, and noncontinuous." *City of Seattle v. Meah*, 297 P.3d 69 (Wash. Ct. App. 2011), *citing* *State v. Kintz*, 238 P.3d 470 (2010). Though the acts must be separate and distinct, there is no minimum amount of time that needs to separate these two incidents. *State v. Kintz*, 238 P.3d 470 (2010) (court combined two cases where man in van would make several passes in van and approach women out in their neighborhood within a few minute span of time and each pass in the vehicle was a separate instance, though all on same day and he did not get out of vehicle.)

¹⁸² WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.46.110(6)(c) defines "Harassment" by referring to the definition of "Unlawful harassment" in WASH. REV. CODE § 10.14.020 (2013):

"Unlawful harassment" means a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific person which seriously alarms, annoys, harasses, or is detrimental to such person,

(b) The person being . . . followed is placed in fear that the stalker intends to injure the person, another person, or property of the person or of another person. The feeling of fear must be one that a reasonable person in the same situation would experience under all the circumstances;¹⁸⁴ and

(c) The stalker either:

- (i) Intends to frighten, intimidate or harass the person; or
- (ii) Knows or reasonably should know the person is afraid, intimidated or harassed even if the stalker did not intend to place the person in fear or intimidate or harass the person¹⁸⁵

Throughout the four books, Bella is a victim of stalking by Edward and numerous other characters.¹⁸⁶ Edward repeatedly follows Bella, both in and out of her home, including when she is with her friends. He even breaks into her home to watch her all night long.

Almost immediately after moving to Forks, Edward's disturbing pattern starts. Before she starts dating Edward, Bella was in a nearby town with two friends, Jessica and Angela, when Edward just shows up: "I *followed* you to Port

and which serves no legitimate or lawful purpose. The course of conduct shall be such as would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, and shall actually cause substantial emotional distress to the petitioner, or, when the course of conduct would cause a reasonable parent to fear for the well-being of their child.

"Course of conduct" means a pattern of conduct composed of a series of acts over a period of time, however short, evidencing a continuity of purpose. "Course of conduct" includes, in addition to any other form of communication, contact, or conduct, the sending of an electronic communication, but does not include constitutionally protected free speech. Constitutionally protected activity is not included within the meaning of "course of conduct."

¹⁸³ WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.46.110(6)(b) defines "follows" as:

deliberately maintaining visual or physical proximity to a specific person over a period of time. A finding that the alleged stalker repeatedly and deliberately appears at the person's home, school, place of employment, business, or any other location to maintain visual or physical proximity to the person is sufficient to find that the alleged stalker follows the person. It is not necessary to establish that the alleged stalker follows the person while in transit from one location to another.

Someone can be "followed" if someone deliberately matches the other person's movements, so as to be at the same place at the same time in an attempt to contact the person. *See State v. Lee*, 957 P.2d 741 (1998); *see also State v. Askham*, 86 P.3d 1224, 1229 (2004) *review denied*, 103 P.3d 201 (2004).

¹⁸⁴ The Washington Pattern Jury Instruction for stalking defines "reasonable fear" in the stalking statute through reference to malicious harassment: "reasonable fear is a fear that a reasonable person would have under all the circumstances." 11 Wash. Prac., Pattern Jury Instr. Crim. WPIC 36.21 (3d Ed). *See also* "malicious harassment" WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.36.080(1)(c) (2013). This reasonable fear of an alleged stalker can be shown in a variety of ways; *see State v. Ainslie*, 11 P.3d 318, 321 (2000) (where court found reasonable fear because car repeatedly parked outside a 14-year-old girl's home, man would occasionally get out of the car to watch the girl, and man did not stop when father approached and told him to); *see also State v. Askham*, 86 P.3d 1224, 1229 (2004) *review denied*, 103 P.3d 201 (2004) (reasonable fear could be found if one looked to the entire course of the harassing conduct: where man was stalking ex-girlfriend's new boyfriend by posting doctored inappropriate photos of him online, registering him on racist websites, sending him threatening emails, and contacting the man's boss with the fake photos and fake information).

¹⁸⁵ WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.46.110(1)(a)-(c) (2013).

¹⁸⁶ In addition to Edward, Laurent, Victoria, James, and other representatives of the Volturi engage in acts of stalking. *See infra* note 221.

Angeles,' he *admitted* . . . I wondered if it should bother me that he was *following* me."¹⁸⁷ He adds: "'It's harder than it should be – *keeping track of you*. Usually I can find someone very easily, once I've heard their mind before' 'I was *keeping tabs on Jessica*, not carefully . . . and at first I didn't notice when you took off on your own.'"¹⁸⁸ Edward continues, "Then when I realized you weren't with her anymore, *I went looking for you* . . . I could tell you'd gone south . . . and I knew you would have to turn around soon. So I was *just waiting for you*, randomly searching through the thoughts of people on the street – to see if anyone had noticed you *so I would know where you were*."¹⁸⁹ Edward intentionally followed Bella to Port Angeles. He admits Bella is hard to keep track of, but also that he is repeatedly following her and keeping track of her every move. He not only physically follows her in his car but he also keeps track of her whereabouts by reading the thoughts of others.

On another occasion, Edward tracks Bella and follows her in his car, harassing and intimidating her by driving inches behind her. "It came out of nowhere. One minute there was nothing but bright highway in my rearview mirror. The next minute, the sun was glinting off a silver Volvo *right on my tail* The Volvo *followed* inches behind me. I kept my eyes on the road ahead. Chicken through and through, I drove straight to Angela's without once meeting the gaze *I could feel burning a hole* in my mirror. *He followed me* until I pulled to the curb in front of the Webers' house."¹⁹⁰ Edward intentionally followed Bella. He harassed her by following inches behind on the highway. Bella responds by driving straight to a friend's house. This reaction suggests that she was seeking to be with others to hopefully avoid him and his continuing to follow and harass her—suggesting that he indeed has made Bella "fear that the stalker intends to injure" her.¹⁹¹

Edward also follows Bella when she is with her father, Charlie. When the two go out to eat: "I had my back to the front windows, and I resisted the urge to turn around and search for the eyes I could feel on me now. I know I wouldn't be able to see anything. Just as I knew there was no chance that he would leave me unguarded, even for a second."¹⁹² When they leave the restaurant: "Something moved in the shadows. My gasp turned into a sigh of relief as Edward appeared out of the gloom."¹⁹³

Additionally Edward follows Bella when she visits Jacob. Edward calls while Jacob is with Bella, "darkly" saying he is "around the corner."¹⁹⁴ An even

¹⁸⁷ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 174, emphasis added.

¹⁸⁸ *Id.* at 175, emphasis added.

¹⁸⁹ *Id.* at 176, emphasis added.

¹⁹⁰ *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 131-32.

¹⁹¹ WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.46.110 (b) (2013).

¹⁹² *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 360.

¹⁹³ *Id.* at 361.

¹⁹⁴ *Id.* at 338.

more intense example of Edward following, and thus harassing, Bella occurs just before she is about to visit Jacob. Edward appears in her truck, startling her:

And then a small motion in my peripheral vision made me jump. “Gah!” I gasped in shock when I saw that I was not alone in the cab. Edward sat very still . . . only his hands moving as he turned a mysterious black object around and around [part of her car’s engine so she would not be able to drive] . . . “Alice called,” he murmured. Alice! Damn. I’d forgotten to account for her in my plans. He must have her watching me . . . He spoke . . . still looking at the piece of my truck’s engine as he twirled it in his hands . . . “I’ll put your car back together in time for school.”¹⁹⁵

Edward has followed Bella and also had another person, his sister, Alice, watch her to find out where she will be going and keep Edward informed.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, Edward also continued to harass Bella by letting her know that he would put the car back together but only so she can get to and from school, and for no other purpose. The threatening twirling motion of the engine piece in his hand, coupled with his words that he will fix the car only in time for school, show his repeated efforts to be watching and controlling where and when she goes.

In addition to repeatedly following Bella when she is with friends or in her car, Edward shows up repeatedly outside and inside her home, even breaking in, for the purpose of watching her. One morning when she is leaving for school: “It was such a thick fog that I was a few feet down the driveway before I realized there was a car in it: a silver car . . . I didn’t see where he came from but *suddenly he was there*, pulling the door open for me.”¹⁹⁷

Further, Bella invites Edward into her home for the first time, only to learn that Edward has already been creeping inside almost every night to *watch* her sleep:

He reached the door ahead of me and opened it for me. I paused halfway through the frame. “The door was unlocked?” “No, I used the key from under the eave.” I stepped inside, flicked on the porch light, and turned to look at him with my eyebrows raised. I was sure I’d never used that key in front of him. “I was curious about you.” “You spied on me?” . . . “What else is there to do at night?” . . . “How often?” I asked casually . . . “How often do you come here?” “*I come here almost every night.*” I whirled, stunned. “Why?” “*You’re interesting when you sleep.*”¹⁹⁸

There are also repeated instances when Edward secretly gets into Bella’s

¹⁹⁵ *Id.* at 62-63.

¹⁹⁶ If Edward is not able to personally watch Bella, he has his “sister,” Alice keep track of her. For example, when Edward had to leave town, he has Alice invite Bella over to the Cullens’ house for a “slumber party,” so Alice can watch Bella continuously. Edward even rewards Alice with a Porsche for doing this. *Id.* at 145. Bella recognizes that Alice is monitoring her. Bella asks Alice, ““You’re kidnapping me, aren’t you?” [Alice] laughed and nodded . . . ‘you’re staying with me two nights, and I will drive you to and from school.’” *Id.* at 145.

¹⁹⁷ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 197, emphasis added.

¹⁹⁸ *Id.* at 292-93, emphasis added.

home and waits for Bella in her room.¹⁹⁹ This occurs so often that Bella expects him to be there. On one of these occasions, Bella anticipates Edward is angry with her, and she is undoubtedly uneasy and anxious about the repeated number of times he follows her and appears in her room. As she leaves Charlie in another room, on the way to hers:

See you later,' Charlie called after me. If I survive, I thought to myself. I shut my bedroom door carefully before I turned to face my room. Of course, he was there. He stood against the wall across from me, in the shadow beside the open window. His face was hard and his posture tense. He glared at me wordlessly. I cringed.²⁰⁰

These instances illustrate Edward repeatedly follows Bella sufficient to satisfy the first element of stalking under Washington law.

In addition to repeatedly being followed or harassed, a stalking victim must be placed in fear that the stalker intends to injure her, her property, another, or property of another.²⁰¹ The feeling of fear must be one that a reasonable person in the same situation would experience under all the circumstances.²⁰² Bella's fear is perhaps the most thought-provoking element to analyze.

A close analysis of Bella's feelings, as she herself presents them—remember, the story is told through Bella's first person narrative—shows that Bella's descriptions of fear are intermixed with words that temper her fear and depicted through a lens of allure, love and lust. This makes it easy for the author to justify the fear. By creating Bella to be confused and to conflate pleasure with fear of injury—and later injury itself²⁰³—Meyer has stripped Bella of the ability to sustain the kind of “feeling” of fear a reasonable person in her situation would experience, though she certainly does feel it. Instead, from Bella's perspective, conflating love and fear is romantic and should be savored, and—subliminally to the young female reader—sought after.

For example, when Edward follows Bella to Port Angeles she thinks: “I wondered if it should bother me that he was following me; instead I felt a strange surge of pleasure.”²⁰⁴ Edward tells Bella, “‘Your number was up the first time I met you.’ I felt a spasm of *fear* at his words, and the abrupt memory of his violent black glare that first day . . . but the overwhelming sense of safety I felt in his

¹⁹⁹ See *id.* at 297 (After dinner Bella rushed to her bedroom and called out the window for Edward, only to be startled by the sound of his “‘Yes’?” coming from behind her where “He lay, smiling hugely, across [her] bed.”); see also *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 262 (when Bella wakes from a nightmare, she observes “The first thing I realized was that I was not alone, and I turned to bury my face in Edward's chest”); *id.* at 46 (where Bella is writing an email to her mom in her room: “I didn't realize Edward was standing silently behind me again until after I'd turned off the computer and shoved away from the desk.”).

²⁰⁰ *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 140.

²⁰¹ WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.46.110 (2013).

²⁰² WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.46.110(1)(b) (2013).

²⁰³ See *e.g.* text accompanying notes 237, 238, 239, and 240.

²⁰⁴ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 174.

2014]

TWILIGHT

75

presence stifled it. By the time he looked up to read my eyes, there was no trace of fear in them.”²⁰⁵

Similarly, when Edward appears at the end of her driveway and she sees his car:

*My heart thudded, stuttered, and then picked up again in double time. I didn't see where he came from, but suddenly he was there, pulling the door open for me . . . [He was] amused by my expression as he caught me by surprise yet again. There was uncertainty in his voice. He was really giving me a choice—I was free to refuse and part of him hoped for that. It was a vain hope.*²⁰⁶

When he drives and follows the tail of her truck: “‘Aw, crap,’ I whimpered. I considered pulling over. But *I was too much of a coward to face him right away. I'd been counting on some prep time . . . and having Charlie nearby as a buffer. At least that would force him to keep his voice down.*”²⁰⁷ When Edward startles her by appearing out of nowhere in her car, Bella is fearful that she will be constrained—a type of injury—from going anywhere other than where he says. She is afraid to be alone with him because he has permanently damaged her property, a critical part of her truck’s engine.

In these instances Bella faces a mix of fear of injury to herself and her property. Edward’s words, his glare, his loud voice, seeking Charlie as a “buffer” before Bella will face Edward, and the harm to her truck engine, all illustrate fear of some form of injury. Paradoxically, with some of these examples, Bella also takes pleasure in the very same fear of injury that Edward has instilled.²⁰⁸ She is

²⁰⁵ *Id.* at 175 (emphasis added).

²⁰⁶ *Id.* at 197 (emphasis added).

²⁰⁷ *ECLIPSE*, *supra* note 2, at 132 (emphasis added).

²⁰⁸ There are many other examples of the fear of injury intermixed with allure and ‘love.’ Bella conflates love and fear not only when she is followed, but her love for Edward is consistently intermingled with her fear of him. Even in *Twilight*, when Bella and Edward’s relationship is new, she acknowledges, “I fluctuated between anticipation so intense that it was very nearly pain, and an insidious fear that picked at my resolve. I had to keep reminding myself that I’d made my choice, and I wasn’t going back on it . . . And what was my other choice – to cut him out of my life? Intolerable. Besides, since I’d come to Forks, it really seemed like my life was *about* him.” *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 251. Bella’s conflation of love and fear continues as their relationship matures: “His words sent a thrill of fear through me.” *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 288. Again, Bella tells Edward directly of her fear, “‘I was wishing that I could believe that you were real. And I was wishing that I wasn’t afraid.’” *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 262. Edward is particularly dangerous to Bella, not only because of his vampire nature, but because Bella is a particularly appealing meal for Edward. When Edward specifically reminds Bella of the appeal of her scent, Bella fails to respond to the danger and experiences as a romantic caress: “‘And the smell of your *throat*’ . . . He raised his free hand and placed it gently on the side of my neck. I sat very still, the chill of his touch a natural warning – a warning telling me to be terrified. But there was no feeling of fear in me.” *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 275. Bella continues, “Eventually the throb of my pulse quieted, but he didn’t move or speak again as he held me. I knew at any moment it could be too much, and my life could end – so quickly that I might not even notice. And I couldn’t make myself be afraid. I couldn’t think of anything, except that he was touching me.” *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 276.

allured and intrigued by it. She even seems to delight in it. Nevertheless, her fear, no matter how short-lived or melded with love, is very real.

The third and final element of stalking under Washington law focuses not on what the victim feels, but on the stalker's mental state. The stalker must intend to frighten, intimidate or harass the victim or the stalker must know, or reasonably should know, that the victim is afraid, intimidated or harassed, *even if the stalker did not intend to place the victim in fear or intimidate or harass*.²⁰⁹ At the very least, Edward knows or reasonably should know that Bella is afraid, intimidated, or harassed. One might argue that he intends to frighten, intimidate, or harass, because he *is* a vampire and that is exactly what they do. Edward's words to Bella illustrate what he knew²¹⁰ and/or intended:

"It's just that you are so soft, so fragile. I have to mind my actions every moment that we're together so that I don't hurt you. I could kill you quite easily, Bella, simply by accident If I was too hasty . . . if for one second I wasn't paying enough attention, I could reach out, meaning to touch your face, and crush your skull by mistake. You don't realize how incredibly *breakable* you are. I can never, never afford to lose any kind of control when I'm with you." He waited for me to respond, growing anxious when I didn't. "Are you scared?" he asked.²¹¹

He also tells Bella: "It's wrong. It's not safe. I'm dangerous, Bella – please, grasp that."²¹² "[T]he very worst was feeling . . . knowing that I couldn't stop. Believing that I was going to kill you myself."²¹³ Bella responds, "But you didn't."²¹⁴ And Edward admits, "I could have. So easily."²¹⁵ When Bella suffers a cut and bleeds, Edward and the other vampires are attracted to the smell of her blood. After she receives stitches, Edward tells her: "Mike Newton [a human classmate who likes Bella], could have held your hand while they stitched you up – and he wouldn't be fighting the urge to kill you the whole time he was there."²¹⁶

²⁰⁹ WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.46.110(1)(c)(ii) (2011).

²¹⁰ See generally MIDNIGHT SUN, *supra* note 41. In Stephenie Meyer's unpublished draft of MIDNIGHT SUN she is particularly clear that Edward knew Bella should fear him. MIDNIGHT SUN was drafted after the Twilight saga and is the only time the story is told from Edward's perspective. The four Twilight books are told mainly from Bella's point of view, though some chapters in *BREAKING DAWN* are told in Jacob's voice. When the reader does finally hear Edward's point of view on his first interactions with Bella in MIDNIGHT SUN, he clearly recognizes that Bella should fear him. He specifically tells Bella that they should not be friends, because it would be better for them. *Id.* at 114. Later, he acknowledges that Bella does not exhibit the proper fear of him "yet." *Id.* at 124. Further, he admits to his brother Bella's vulnerability and the danger he puts her in, saying that he is dangerous to her and is unlikely to touch her without hurting her. *Id.* at 152. Finally, he acknowledges that he should not be following her, and that he cannot tell her because if she knew she would think he was "creepy." *Id.* at 155.

²¹¹ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 310.

²¹² *Id.* at 190.

²¹³ *Id.* at 472.

²¹⁴ *Id.*

²¹⁵ *Id.*

²¹⁶ *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 45.

2014]

TWILIGHT

77

Each of these instances show that Edward knew or reasonably should have known that Bella would be frightened or intimidated by someone who is very attracted to her, repeatedly follows her, and has to fight off the urge to kill her.

While it also could be argued that Edward's ultimate goal was to protect rather than frighten Bella, it is irrelevant for purposes of the stalking statute that Edward might not have actually intended to place Bella in fear or intimidate or harass her.²¹⁷ Edward need only have known or reasonably should have known that Bella was afraid.²¹⁸ It is indubitable that Edward knew or should have known that Bella was afraid or intimidated. Indeed that he is a 'vampire' in itself gives him that knowledge. Bella's words and actions show she is afraid, and Edward knows it:

'As if you could fight me off,' he said gently. I sat without moving, more *frightened* of him than I had ever been. I'd never seen him so completely freed of that carefully cultivated façade. He'd never been less human . . . or more beautiful. Face ashen, eyes wide, I *sat like a bird locked in the eyes of a snake*.

. . . .

'*Don't be afraid*,' he murmured, his velvet voice unintentionally seductive. 'I *swear* not to hurt you.' He seemed more *concerned with convincing himself* than me. '*Don't be afraid*,' he whispered . . . 'Please forgive me,' he said formally. 'I *can* control myself. You caught me off guard. But I'm on my best behavior now.' He waited, but I still couldn't speak. '*I'm not thirsty today, honestly*.' *He winked*.²¹⁹

There is no doubt here that Edward knows or reasonably should know that Bella is afraid. Why else would he try to convince her not to be? Why else would Bella observe that Edward was convincing himself as well as her that he would not hurt her?

The wink is perhaps the most troubling part of this scene. The message here, carefully crafted by Meyer, is that a wink—usually associated with flirting—from a sexy, irresistible guy assuages fear of him. Yet, his wink is what makes it certain that Edward is aware of Bella's fear. Why would he feel the need to flirt for any reason other than to try to win her over by softening the fear he so obviously knows she is feeling or reasonably should be feeling? The only answer can be to assuage her fears.

Edward also takes advantage of the fear and intimidation Bella feels to continue to follow Bella's whereabouts:

I veered left, toward my truck. Something caught my jacket, yanking me back. 'Where do you think you're going?' he asked, outraged. He was

²¹⁷ WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.46.110(1)(c)(ii) (2013).

²¹⁸ WASH. REV. CODE § 9A.46.110(1)(b) (2013).

²¹⁹ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 264-65 (emphasis added).

gripping a fistful of my jacket in one hand. I was confused. “I’m going home.”

....

It was all I could do to keep from falling backward. He’d probably just drag me along anyway if I did. ‘Let go!’ I insisted. He ignored me. I staggered along sideways across the wet sidewalk until we reached the Volvo. Then he finally freed me.’

....

“Get in, Bella.” I didn’t answer. I was mentally calculating my chances of reaching the truck before he could catch me. I had to admit, they weren’t good. “I’ll just drag you back,” he *threatened*.²²⁰

Here, Edward is aware Bella is afraid and intimidated by him, leaving her little choice but to succumb to his following her and to go—or not go—where he dictates. Edward’s conduct thus satisfies the stalking statute. He repeatedly followed her; she was placed in fear of injury to herself and her property; and Edward either intended to frighten her, or knew or should have known that she was undoubtedly afraid or intimidated.²²¹

B. Bella Is a Victim of Domestic Violence

Even more unsettling than the examples of stalking that *Twilight* provides for vulnerable teen readers are its messages about domestic violence. *Twilight* includes disturbing scenes in which physical violence and bodily injury occur either between teens who are dating or between spouses, both of which qualify as requisite to acts of domestic violence.²²² Furthermore, within the *Twilight* series these acts are accepted, even normal, justified, and valued, as long as they are done in the name of love.

²²⁰ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 103-04 (emphasis added).

²²¹ Edward is not the only vampire who stalks Bella and places her in fear of injury to herself, her property or another. The other vampires who stalk her include Laurent, Victoria, and James and the Volturi. Victoria, her lover James, and their friend, Laurent, stalk Bella first because James wants to hunt her. After the Cullens kill James to protect Bella, Victoria and Laurent, stalk Bella to hurt the Cullens and avenge James. The Volturi are an Italian family of vampires who are the de facto leaders of the vampire world. Both these groups of vampires repeatedly follow Bella and make her fear for her life. They also make her fear for injury to her property and her family. These specific instances of stalking are outside the scope of this Article, which focuses only on Bella and Edward’s romantic relationship. Interestingly, Bella seems more aware of the dangers the other vampires pose to her, and she feels fear, attempts to flee from them, and even involves the Cullens in battles over them. Bella’s fear of the other vampires is not assuaged by any pleasure, love, or allure. *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 444, 461; *see also* text accompanying note 73.

²²² WASH. REV. CODE ANN. § 26.50.010(2-3) (West 2008) (included in the law are spouses and people over 16 years old and in a dating relationship, or had these relationships in the past). Bella and Edward are both over 16 years old and begin dating near the beginning of *Twilight*. Bella and Edward marry in *Breaking Dawn*, so for nearly the entire *Twilight* saga, their relationships would qualify as those covered by the Washington Domestic Violence Prevention Act (“DVPA”).

Under Washington law,²²³ domestic violence that will result in a civil²²⁴ order of protection²²⁵ includes the following:

- (a) Physical harm or
Bodily injury or
Assault²²⁶ or
Infliction of fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, or assault²²⁷
that is
- (b) Between family or household members;²²⁸ (Family or household members include, among other categories: spouses, domestic partners, persons sixteen years of age or older with whom a person sixteen years of age or older has or has had a dating relationship.²²⁹ Dating relationship means a social relationship of a romantic nature.²³⁰) OR
- (c) Stalking²³¹ of one family or household member by another family or household member.²³²

Bella is unquestionably a victim of domestic violence. First, Bella and Edward qualify as “household members” within the meaning of the statute because, throughout the entire series, they are in a dating relationship²³³ and are eventually spouses.²³⁴ If Edward’s actions as analyzed in the prior section of this article constitute stalking under Washington law, that alone would make Bella a victim of

²²³ Because the book is set in Washington, Washington law is being used.

²²⁴ The DVPA is § 50 of the Washington Domestic Relations Act, which is a civil statute. If a domestic violence victim seeks a restraining order, it would be under this statute and, hence, would be a civil action. *See* WASH. REV. CODE ANN. § 26.50.070 (West 2010). To get an order of protection, the petitioner must “allege the existence of domestic violence” and these allegations must be “accompanied by an affidavit made under oath stating specific facts and circumstances from which relief is sought.” WASH. REV. CODE ANN. § 26.50.030(1) (West 2014). There need not be other litigation between the parties for the petition to be made, but if there is other litigation then that must also be revealed at the time the restraining order is requested. *See* WASH. REV. CODE ANN. § 26.50.030(1) and (2) (West 2014).

²²⁵ WASH. REV. CODE ANN. §26.50.010(1) (2008).

²²⁶ The term assault is undefined by the statute and so Washington courts apply its common law definition. Three different definitions of assault are recognized: “(1) an attempt, with unlawful force, to inflict bodily injury upon another; (2) an unlawful touching with criminal intent; (3) putting another in apprehension of harm whether or not the actor actually intends to inflict or is incapable of inflicting that harm.” *State v. Hupe*, 50 Wash.App. 277, 282 (Wash. App. 1988), disapproved of on other grounds by *State v. Smith*, 159 Wash.2d 778, 786-87 (Wash. 2007). In *Smith* the court clarified that the three definitions of assault were not alternative ways to commit an assault. The criminal assault statutes, however, do constitute alternative means of committing assault.

²²⁷ WASH. REV. CODE § 26.50.010(1)(a) (2008).

²²⁸ *Id.* (emphasis added).

²²⁹ *Id.* at § 26.50.010(2) (emphasis added).

²³⁰ *Id.* at § 26.50.010(3) (“Factors that the court may consider in making the determination of whether there is a social relationship of a romantic nature include: (a) the length of time the relationship has existed; (b) the nature of the relationship; (c) the frequency of interaction between the parties.”).

²³¹ *See supra* notes 179-84 and accompanying text.

²³² WASH. REV. CODE § 26.50.010(1)(c) (2008) (emphasis added).

²³³ They are dating in the first three books and get engaged in *ECLIPSE*. *See supra* text accompanying note 2.

²³⁴ They get married in the final book. *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1.

domestic violence under the stalking section —(c) above—of the domestic violence statute because they are household members.²³⁵

Even if Edward has not stalked Bella, his actions constitute domestic violence in Washington because he caused Bella to suffer each of the specific acts listed in the statute, though only one is necessary: physical harm, bodily injury, assault, and infliction of fear of imminent harm, bodily injury, or assault. What's most disturbing about the examples that follow is that Bella's character was constructed not only to conflate fear with love as explored in the stalking section of this Article, but worse, to conflate acts of violence with love and sex. This conflation gives young impressionable teen readers the subliminal message that love makes it acceptable to be battered, bruised, physically tortured, and in fear of imminent physical harm. The following examples satisfy physical harm, bodily injury, or assault,²³⁶ within the meaning of the statute.

The acts of physical harm or fear of such harm range from Edward's direct physical constraint of Bella, to Edward's acts of violence during sex, to further acts of violence during childbirth to make Bella a vampire and "save" Bella, all because he loves her. The most disturbing act of violence that causes Bella physical harm and bodily injury is when Bella and Edward first have sex. Here is the description of the aftermath:

Large purplish bruises were beginning to blossom across the pale skin of my arm. My eyes followed the trail they made up to my shoulder, and then down across my ribs. I pulled my hand free to poke at a discoloration on my left forearm, watching it fade where I touched and then reappear. It throbbled a little

I tried to remember this—to remember pain—but I couldn't. I couldn't recall a moment when his hold had been too tight, his hands too hard against me. I only remembered wanting him to hold me tighter, and being pleased when he did.²³⁷

. . . .

"And this is really nothing." I brushed my fingers along my arm.²³⁸

. . . .

I stared at my naked body in the full-length mirror behind the door. I'd definitely had worse. There was a faint shadow across one of my cheekbones, and my lips were a little swollen, but other than that, my face was fine. The rest of me was decorated with patches of blue and purple. I concentrated on the bruises that would be the hardest to hide – my arms and my shoulders. They weren't so bad. My skin marked up easily. By

²³⁵ WASH. REV. CODE ANN. § 26.50.010(2) (West 2008).

²³⁶ See *supra* note 226 and accompanying text.

²³⁷ *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 89.

²³⁸ *Id.* at 91.

the time a bruise showed I'd usually forgotten how I'd come by it. Of course, these were just developing. I'd look even worse tomorrow.²³⁹

There is no question that Bella suffered physical harm and bodily injury, and Edward had inflicted these injuries upon her during sex, indeed, the first time Bella has sex. This incident in itself is an act of domestic violence. The most troubling aspect of this scene is that Bella deemphasizes her injuries. Moreover, she claims only to remember pleasure, not pain, from Edward's force. In fact, she wanted him to hold her tighter. Bella, a mere teen herself and a heroine to many young teen readers, not only excuses violence because she loves Edward but indeed finds the violence romantic. It is inexplicable why the author decided to include violence, physical harm, and bodily injury to be an integral part of Bella's first loving sexual experience. Nothing could possibly be gained for a young reader to see an easily relatable heroine in love find bliss in her swollen lips and large bruises all over her body—injuries that will look worse in the next several days—but who remembers only pleasure in receiving them. This kind of violence against a young woman is completely unwarranted in any love story.

When Edward injects Bella with venom to make her a vampire, Bella thinks:

I could remember *why* I shouldn't scream. I could remember the reason why I'd committed to enduring this unendurable agony. I could remember that, though it felt impossible now, there was something that might be worth the torture . . . To anyone watching me, there would be no change. But for me, as I struggled to keep the screams and thrashing locked up inside my body, where they couldn't hurt anyone else . . . I had just enough strength to lie there unmoving while I was charred alive.²⁴⁰

Edward's violence conveys dangerous messages to teenage girls, and it is hard to imagine anything, even love or becoming a vampire in the name of love, that would justify "charring a woman alive." The physical harm and agony Bella experiences simply have no place in a fairytale love story.

Even if the "fantasy fan" laughs at or dismisses the idea that there is domestic violence in *Twilight*, it is indisputable that the story intimates, even if subconsciously, that physical harm is acceptable in a loving relationship, particularly if your lover is a strong, powerful protector. It is difficult for a young, inexperienced teen to separate the harm from the fantasy and excitement when the harm is presented as integral to the excitement and love itself. In contrast, an experienced adult may find it natural to separate the acceptable fantasy from the unacceptable violence—again, even laughing at the thought of any conceivable legal actions being embedded among the "fun"—while a young, impressible teen—indeed Bella herself—often lacks capability to do so. She may even be unaware that messages about accepting violence are lurking underneath the excitement.

²³⁹ *Id.* at 95-96.

²⁴⁰ *Id.* at 378-79.

The “fantasy” aspects of vampire teeth, venom, and violence are not the only physical harm, assault, or fear Bella experiences. Throughout the saga, in her everyday non-fantasy existence, Bella accepts as perfectly appropriate, if not normal, numerous instances of fear, physical harm, and constraint, all inflicted by Edward. In Bella’s own words throughout the series, she describes some of them: “His arm created an inescapable snare around my waist.”²⁴¹ “[M]y arms, pinned beneath Edward’s . . . had become restraints,²⁴² and “Edward pulled me back again, his arms restraining instead of defending.”²⁴³ Some of the examples that have already been explored in the context of stalking,²⁴⁴ also illustrate physical harm and assault²⁴⁵ as well:

He was grabbing a fistful of my jacket in one hand . . . He was towing me toward his car now, pulling me by my jacket. It was all I could do to keep from falling backward. He’d probably just drag me along if I did²⁴⁶ . . . I staggered along sideways across the wet sidewalk until we reached . . . [his] Volvo. Then he finally freed me – I stumbled against the passenger door. “You are *so pushy!*” I grumbled . . . “I am perfectly capable of driving myself home!” “Get in, Bella.” I didn’t answer. I was mentally calculating my chances of reaching the truck before he could catch me. I had to admit, they weren’t good. “I’ll just drag you back,” he threatened.²⁴⁷

Edward causes Bella physical harm when he grabs her jacket, pulls her, causes her to stagger sideways across a wet sidewalk, and releases her with enough force to thrust her against the car door. Edward was assaulting Bella within the meaning of the domestic violence statute because he threatened to drag her back to his car, if she tried to leave and get to her own vehicle. This certainly put Bella in apprehension of harm, as she realized that if she tried to reach her truck Edward would only drag her back again. Here, Bella is expressing her apprehension of harm in being dragged around.

In another familiar incident:

‘As if you could fight me off,’ he said gently. I sat without moving, more frightened of him than I had ever been. I’d never seen him so completely freed of that carefully cultivated façade. He’d never been less human . . . or more beautiful. Face ashen, eyes wide, I sat like a bird locked in the eyes of a snake. . . . “Don’t be afraid,” he murmured, his velvet voice

²⁴¹ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 284.

²⁴² *ECPLISE*, *supra* note 2, at 83-84.

²⁴³ *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 561.

²⁴⁴ *See supra* text accompanying notes 218-21.

²⁴⁵ Using the definition of assault that provides putting another in apprehension of harm, whether or not the actor actually intends to inflict or is incapable of inflicting harm. 11 Wash. Prac., Pattern Jury Instr. Crim. WPIC 35.50 (3d Ed). *See also supra* note 226 and accompanying text.

²⁴⁶ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 103.

²⁴⁷ *Id.* at 104.

unintentionally seductive. “I promise . . .” He hesitated. “I *swear* not to hurt you.” He seemed more concerned with convincing himself than me. “Don’t be afraid,” he whispered . . . “Please forgive me,” he said formally. “I *can* control myself. You caught me off guard. But I’m on my best behavior now.” He waited, but I still couldn’t speak. “I’m not thirsty today, honestly.” He winked.²⁴⁸

Bella is frightened and apprehensive of harm, in fact, appearing more frightened of Edward than she had ever been. In addition to the assault itself, there is another disturbing element in this scene: Edward’s apology. “‘Please forgive me,’ he said formally. ‘I can control myself. You caught me off guard. But I’m on my best behavior now.’”²⁴⁹ This is reminiscent of the cycle of violence that typifies situations where the actor who has engaged in the violence apologizes, the victim is convinced that the perpetrator will behave, and it starts all over again.²⁵⁰ While there is nothing to suggest a cycle of domestic violence in Twilight series, one element of such a cycle is present: the message to the young teen reader that it is acceptable for a romantic partner to harm you or instill the fear of harm, if you love him and if he apologizes.

The role of joking and flirting also sends disconcerting messages. Edward’s playfulness: “As if you could fight me off,”²⁵¹ and his “wink”²⁵² certainly cannot mean that Edward’s desire and ability to kill Bella are some kind of joke. Rather, the joking and flirting are themselves almost acts of aggression, and it is much more likely such light-heartedness is to soften the fear he knows he instilled in Bella and show his power over her. That Bella should see this as playful augments the dangerous message that it is fine to ignore fear, no matter how real, if the one inflicting the fear loves you, jokes with you, and you love him.

In fact, it is even justifiable to let the one who loves you kill you, if it is in the name of love. According to Bella: “When you loved the one who was killing you, it left you no options. How could you run, how could you fight, when doing so would hurt that beloved one? If your life was all you had to give your beloved, how could you not give it? If it was someone you truly loved?”²⁵³ Giving one’s life for a loved one may be valiant under some circumstances, but willingly giving your love the power to “kill you,” for no other reason is not heroic. Bella’s thinking makes it clear that she here is conflating love and violence. Throughout

²⁴⁸ *Id.* at 264-65.

²⁴⁹ *Id.*

²⁵⁰ See generally ELIN STEBBINS WALDAL, *TORNADO WARNING: A MEMOIR OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AND ITS EFFECT ON A WOMAN’S LIFE* (2011). In Twilight there is no indication that there is the kind of cycle of violence that occurs in many domestic situations, but what does exist here is the apology for harmful behavior and a promise to behave, and the victim thereby believing that it’s okay repeatedly to take the physical harm if there is love an apology thereafter. See also Jacob confronting Bella about teen dating and violence, *infra* text and accompanying notes 260-62.

²⁵¹ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 264.

²⁵² *Id.* at 265.

²⁵³ *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 1-2.

the novels, she experiences casual acts of physical harm and assault, and she seems unaware this conduct is not “normal,” in a loving relationship. The culmination of these violent acts and her casual acceptance of them are evidenced by her belief that she has “no [other] options” but to let her beloved kill her to show her love. Young readers, enamored with *Twilight*, soak up all this justifiable violence.

In addition to meeting the statutory requirements of acts of physical harm, bodily injury, or assault, Edward also inflicts fear of imminent physical harm²⁵⁴ upon Bella, another act, when between household members, will qualify as an act of domestic violence.²⁵⁵ Edward acknowledges: “I’m the world’s best predator, aren’t I?”²⁵⁶ Again, Edward reminds Bella, “The very worst was feeling . . . knowing that I couldn’t stop. Believing that I was going to kill you myself.”²⁵⁷ Bella fears Edward: “If I ever feared death before in his presence, it was nothing compared to how I felt now.”²⁵⁸ Again, Bella is afraid of Edward, “When I could no longer bear the *violent* energy radiating out of him, I quietly left the room . . . I couldn’t talk to this icy, focused Edward, who honestly *frightened me* a little.”²⁵⁹ These are all instances in which Bella feels fear of imminent harm.

Other characters in the series corroborate the fear that Edward instills. Even the housekeeper at the Cullens’ island house knows Bella should be afraid. She believes Edward will kill Bella. Edward translates for Bella: “She’s [the housekeeper] insisting on leaving the food she brought . . . It’s an excuse—she wants to make sure I haven’t killed you yet.”²⁶⁰ Likewise, Jacob outwardly expresses concern to Bella how controlling Edward is. Specifically, Jacob raises the issue of teen dating violence and control, after he asked Bella to a bonfire party, and Bella tells him she must first ask Edward’s permission: “‘I’ll ask,’ ‘I said doubtfully . . . ‘Is he your warden now, too? You know, I saw this story on the news last week about controlling, abusive teenage relationships and—’ ‘Okay!’ I cut him off . . . He grinned. ‘Bye, Bells. Be sure you ask *permission*.’”²⁶¹ Bella does not want to hear Jacob’s concerns, and she cuts him off. Perhaps there is a part of Bella that knows or should know that Edward is cutting her off from relationships with others, but she may fear imminent physical harm if she did not submit to his control.²⁶²

²⁵⁴ WASH. REV. CODE § 26.50.010(1) (2008).

²⁵⁵ *Id.* at § 26.50.010(2).

²⁵⁶ *TWILIGHT*, *supra* note 2, at 263.

²⁵⁷ *Id.* at 472.

²⁵⁸ *Id.* at 280.

²⁵⁹ *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 130-31. As with the fear Bella felt with respect to stalking, here too, sometimes Bella knows she should be afraid but she’s not because she loves Edward; *see supra* note 210.

²⁶⁰ *BREAKING DAWN*, *supra* note 1, at 134.

²⁶¹ *ECPLISE*, *supra* note 2, at 224.

²⁶² The fact that Meyer included this particular scene with Jacob confronting Bella about teen violence is intriguing. Meyer certainly seemed to be recognizing that there may be too much violence and abusiveness in teen relationships generally; but, is she also recognizing that there is too much violence in her own story? Or at least that commentators might criticize *Twilight* as going too far in this

C. Bella Is Surrounded by Other Acts of Domestic Violence

Besides Edward and Bella, another relationship in the Twilight series highlights physical violence between mates, resulting in severe bodily injury. The relationship between the werewolf Sam²⁶³ and his human fiancée Emily²⁶⁴ also includes physical harm and is presented in a way that makes it justifiable because it is overlain with love. Sam is a part of Jacob's pack²⁶⁵ and lives with Emily.²⁶⁶ They started dating after he turned into a werewolf because he imprinted on her. Imprinting is the process whereby werewolves choose their soul mate—a decision over which the soul mate has no choice.²⁶⁷ Sam and Emily's home is described as a very cheerful: bright kitchen, overflowing wild flowers in a blue and white china pitcher on the table, and Sam full of affection for Emily when he arrives home.²⁶⁸ Moreover, Emily takes care of and cooks for Sam and sometimes the other wolves in the pack.²⁶⁹ She believes they are her family.²⁷⁰ However, there is a dark side: the entire side of Emily's face is permanently scarred.²⁷¹

Jacob tells Bella that although it was reported that Emily was mauled by a bear, the truth is that Sam caused her injuries.²⁷² Jacob explains, "Sam lost control of his temper for just one second . . . and she was standing too close. And now there's nothing he can ever do to put it right again. I hear his thoughts—I know what it feels like."²⁷³ Edward warns Bella. "Werewolves are unstable. Sometimes, the people near them get hurt. Sometimes they get killed.' I wanted to deny it, but another image slowed my rebuttal. I saw in my head the once beautiful face of Emily Young, now marred by a trio of dark scars that dragged down the corner of her right eye and left her mouth warped forever into a lopsided scowl."²⁷⁴ Jacob tells Bella: "'You know how she got hurt?' 'Yeah.' The story in Forks was that she was mauled by a bear, but I was in on the secret . . . 'Well, weirdly enough, that was sort of how they resolved things. Sam was so horrified, so

way? Or does Meyer fail to see the undue violence in her own story and this exchange represents an attempt to make a significant social commentary? From the perspective of telling the Twilight "story" itself, this exchange appears to be inessential. One likely purpose in including this particular exchange is that Meyer may indeed have been anticipating criticism about the violence in Twilight and is seeking to detract from it in some way.

²⁶³ See *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 324.

²⁶⁴ See *id.* at 329.

²⁶⁵ See *id.* at 324.

²⁶⁶ See *id.* at 329-30.

²⁶⁷ See *ECPLISE*, *supra* note 2, at 122-23.

²⁶⁸ *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 333.

²⁶⁹ *Id.* at 328. (Embry says, "Let's go see Emily. You know she'll have food waiting."); *Id.* at 331. (Emily does have food waiting).

²⁷⁰ *Id.* at 338. ("Her expression clearly stated that this was her family."); see also *id.* at 332 (Embry takes more food; Emily tells him, "Save some for your brothers").

²⁷¹ *Id.* at 331, 333 (scars down arm and hand, too).

²⁷² *Id.* at 340 (Charlie tells Bella Emily was mauled by a bear); *Id.* at 345 (Jacob implies Sam snapped on Emily, causing her scars).

²⁷³ *Id.* at 345.

²⁷⁴ *ECPLISE*, *supra* note 2, at 30.

sickened by himself, so full of hate for what he'd done . . . He was shattered . . . Then, somehow, *she* was the one comforting *him*, and after that.”²⁷⁵

Sam's mauling Emily is certainly domestic violence. The legal elements are satisfied: there is a household relationship, and there has clearly been bodily injury. But even more disturbing than the existence of a legal cause of action is the repeated message that love and apologies mitigate physical violence. Upon arriving home, Sam kisses Emily, taking her face in his hands; he kisses the dark scars on the right side of her face before her lips;²⁷⁶ he appears to dote on her;²⁷⁷ ostensibly apologizing and seeking forgiveness. Emily feels like she belongs to the wolves; they are her family;²⁷⁸ she takes care of them.²⁷⁹ The reader is told that Sam's life-shattering overwhelming remorse and love somehow justify Emily's injuries. Indeed, in a paradoxical reversal, Emily comforts Sam. Worse yet, it seems that Jacob feels sorry for Sam. Shockingly, Jacob intimates that Emily was in part at fault because she was too close.²⁸⁰ Of course, Jacob is the one to explain all this to Bella, presenting the same message.

Irrespective of the “fantasy” of werewolves, a young reader might receive disconcerting messages about power, control, and violence in relationships, and some of these young readers alas, maybe exploring romantic relationships for the first time. “Imprinting” is a one-sided “love at first sight” concept, which unquestionably conflates love with complete control and ownership of the other person. The “imprinting” occurrences within *Twilight* are always by a man upon a woman, and it is the woman who is overpowered and has no choice. Moreover, in *Twilight*, the role of imprinting generally, and its role in Sam and Emily's sad history more specifically, have no relevance whatsoever in telling Edward and Bella's love story. Perhaps Emily reminds young readers that physical appearance should not be important. But there was no reason to teach this valuable lesson through acts of violence and control. Indeed this suggested theme is muted when considered in conjunction with Bella's choice of Edward over Jacob,²⁸¹ Edward being the better looking and more glittering selection. The more notable feature of Emily and Sam's relationship is the act of violence against a woman who is scarred at the hands of the boyfriend she loves. Emily's tragic story confirms the message—already loud and clear from Bella and Edward's relationship—that physical violence and injury are acceptable and completely justified if the one inflicting harm “loves” you. Imprinting, as well as Sam and Emily's tale, serves no possible purpose in the *Twilight* saga but to set a terrible example for young,

²⁷⁵ *Id.* at 123-24.

²⁷⁶ *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 333.

²⁷⁷ *Id.* at 335.

²⁷⁸ *See supra* text accompanying notes 269-70.

²⁷⁹ *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 350.

²⁸⁰ *See NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2, at 345 (“You've seen Emily. Sam lost control of his temper for just one second . . . and she was standing too close.”).

²⁸¹ *See infra* Part V.B.1.

2014]

TWILIGHT

87

inexperienced women readers embarking on their own journeys of self-discovery as to what is acceptable when it comes to love.

Thus, damaging examples of and messages about domestic violence fill *Twilight*. Young fans are smart enough to recognize *Twilight* is a fantasy, and no vampires will sweep them off their feet, marry them, transform them, and take them into a world of secrecy, glamour, and excitement. But again Bella and Edward's relationship develops in a very real, typical small town high school, with typical high school students, facing typical teenage problems, including all the social and dating issues that teens typically face. It is in that context that Bella makes her decisions about giving up her humanity, being with Edward, and most importantly permitting him to control and isolate, scare her, and even physically harm her, in the name of love. Certainly readers can separate the story's fantasy from life's reality; but it is less likely that young readers who see themselves in Bella or in Edward, at a place in their lives very much like Bella and Edward's, will be able to recognize the danger posed by accepting physical violence and injury as part of a relationship. Intended or not, the attitudes presented about isolation, control, physical violence and bodily injury are ones which may subliminally veer young readers into abusive or physically violent relationships. By conflating love and sex with pain, injury and violence, the reader comes to believe that these are all tolerable, when in the name of love.

V. CONSEQUENCES OF TWILIGHT AND THE REMAKING OF BELLA

A. Consequences for the Reader

Bella may have been more victim than heroine. By falling prey to Edward's beauty, smell, voice, and charm, Bella is manipulated and allured into an irresistible world that magically makes her perfect and gives her purpose and identity. Bella believed her journey to Edward's world was driven by only true love. This Article has shown, however, it is likely a great deal more than "love" operating upon her, including Bella's life circumstances as the only child of divorced parents bereft of abilities to take care of her. Edward provided the care and attention she never had, but it was inextricable from his control. From Bella's perspective she had found fairytale "love" with Edward, but it was conflated with control, violence, and illegal acts too, all of which she could not discern.

Like Bella, the reader is manipulated by this "love story." By hearing the story in Bella's own words, the reader is placed in Bella's own shoes, seeing only what she sees, hearing only what she hears, feeling only what she feels. And what Bella sees, hears, and feels is relatable because it is all human. Indeed Bella is human from the start of the story and remains so for most of *Twilight*. Thus, Bella's humanity and vulnerability become imbedded in the reader. Bella's human vulnerabilities resonate particularly with young girls and teen readers, when they see themselves in Bella. When Bella faces extraordinary situations and makes

ostensibly strong decisions, women readers believe they too can be strong. Hence, *Twilight* appears to support young readers' development.

Because the reader relates to Bella and "feels" what Bella feels throughout the story, the reader too falls in love with the vampire world and like Bella, is unaware of the influences working on Bella. The reader is pushed to romanticize control and violence without recognizing the danger. Relishing the love story, the reader believes Bella's voice is confident and strong. But Bella has little, if any, confidence or self-esteem during most of the story. As a result, Bella's decisions are not made from a position of sound, independent judgment. Instead, Bella's weaknesses are subsumed by the "love" she believes will eliminate her problems and vulnerabilities. In actuality, Bella abandons herself for her man and his world. She has not resolved anything on her own, discovered her own identity, or become any more self-reliant than she was before. Like Bella, the reader is equally overcome by "love" as seen through Bella's eyes, and like Bella, the reader entangles such "love" with sex, control, and violence, believing that her own vulnerabilities can similarly be eradicated, her problems solved, and her life perfect, if only she can find a man like Edward to rescue her and love her eternally.

Bella's weaknesses are subsumed not only by "love" as she sees it, but by becoming more like her man. Her extraordinary powers come "from" him, and she even becomes violent herself, as he has shown her. She derives her strength from succumbing to her man and his entire world, its rules, and for the most part its values. Only then does she become a "heroine" and, in fact, the most powerful among them. While such ultimate woman power appears at first blush to be the best feminist outcome, it is not as meaningful as it seems for Bella because her power results from entangling love, sex, and violence when rescued by her man.

Under these circumstances, it can hardly be said that Bella's strength and power are really her own, and it is debatable at best whether Bella has realized her own true identity, rather than merely fulfilling what Edward and his world have molded her to be. Likewise it is uncertain whether Bella's life decisions reflect independence, or whether she has been completely dependent and reliant upon, as well as controlled by, Edward in making critical life choices. Bella is problematic as a role model, and her relationship with Edward sets a poor example for young adults.

The *Twilight* series poses more danger than direction for young, naïve, impressionable readers. Lured into believing Bella is someone with whom to identify and to emulate because she is strong and independent, the reader may – just like Bella – conflate "love" with sex and violence, not merely as a reader but perhaps in her own life too. Perhaps the reader will be completely unable to distinguish control and violence from love. Perhaps the reader too will seek protection and rescue, ultimately being defined by a man, rather than truly learning who she herself is or can be. Perhaps the reader, too, will be unable to recognize when she is failing to make independent, strong decisions and to realize that true love can co-

exist with both self-reliance and independence. Perhaps the reader, too, will be a victim.

B. Alternatives to Make Bella a More Deserving Heroine and Role Model

Without sacrificing the fun, fantasy, or love story, there are at least four possible alternative ways—or any combination of them—that *Twilight* could have been told. Each of these alternatives would give readers, especially young women, stronger messages about independence, meaningful choices, and healthy relationships. First, Bella could have chosen Jacob, instead of Edward. Second, Edward could have been lured back into the human world by his love for Bella, who is so strong and independent that he wants to give up the vampire world for her and her world. Third, after Bella's transformation is complete and she lives for a while as a vampire, she could realize it was the wrong decision for her, and she seeks to transform back. Fourth, keep Bella's decision to become a vampire, but with completely different circumstances that would reflect Bella's development as an independent woman, without control, violence or injury inflicted on her by a man. With each of these alternatives, Bella could take a more deserving place as a role model and perhaps even a heroine.

1. Bella Chooses Jacob

A decision to choose Jacob over Edward presents a healthier alternative for Bella. This decision also sends healthier messages to the reader, including ones that are far more appropriate in a 21st century world.

Jacob is first and foremost Bella's best friend. He understands Bella and gives her more space to be herself than Edward does.²⁸² As her friend, Jacob is understanding and respectful of Bella, and he encourages her to decide who wants to be.²⁸³ Edward, contrarily, wants to keep her close, control her, lure her, and ultimately define her by his world values. Indeed, it is Jacob who approaches Bella about teen dating control and violence, when he is concerned that Bella needs to ask "permission" from Edward to be with friends.²⁸⁴ Perhaps this contrast is why Bella simply cannot let go of her relationship with Jacob. She is drawn to him, his true understanding of her, and she recognizes that she does love him. She is blinded, however, by Edward's magical world and cannot recognize Jacob gives her greater freedom and respect.

²⁸² Unlike Edward, Jacob does not try to control Bella. He does not even try to influence whom she should be with on a daily basis, where she should go, what she should do, what she should wear, when she can see her friends and family, or what she is allowed to tell them. Jacob does not even push Bella to come around to see him on the reservation. In stark contrast to Edward, Jacob allows Bella the space she needs to be her own person and make her own decisions.

²⁸³ Jacob even helps her pursue learning about motorcycles and ride them, even though, unbeknownst to him, she is doing so to put herself in danger. See *NEW MOON*, *supra* note 2 at 181-88.

²⁸⁴ See *supra* text accompanying notes 260-62.

Unfortunately, by refusing to choose Jacob, Bella perpetuates the falsehood that a friend, even a best friend, is not a “sexy” choice for a life partner because friendship, to Bella, is neither romantic nor a priority in choosing a mate. Rather, lust and romantic love exist separately from friendship. However, Bella’s relationship with Jacob could have been romantic. A teen version of a “When Harry Met Sally”²⁸⁵ relationship could have been very romantic, and portray friendship as an important value in a mate.

Further, Jacob and Bella’s relationship is more genuine than Bella’s relationship with Edward. Jacob and Bella’s friendship lacks the veil of glamour, money, luxury, and material possessions. An added benefit of choosing Jacob would give a message to the reader about priorities in life. Sadly, in choosing Edward, Bella chooses a life of luxury with a wealthy prince-of-sorts who, with the snap-of-the-finger, provides expensive cars, mansions, designer clothes and more, rather than a middle-class Native American, who lives on a reservation and is adept at fixing vehicles. Jacob is simply without the material means that sweeps Bella off her feet.

Edward and Jacob also have very different appearances. The author describes Edward’s looks in great detail: Edward is handsome—sparkly, glittering, and white, and he frequently takes Bella’s breath away. Jacob is dark-skinned, and though Bella sees him as sort of beautiful, the focus on his looks is more on how quickly he grows from a lanky teen into a muscular, strong young man. The predominant description of his appearance is when he morphs into a werewolf, and as such, Jacob’s supernatural appearance is not an attractive one. Rather, the wolves are hairy and scary-looking, threatening creatures, from whom most people would flee immediately. In addition, after Jacob morphs into a werewolf, his clothes are left in a mess—visibly tattered and ruined. In contrast, other than the unusual color of his eyes, Edward remains consistently gorgeous throughout, whether he is revealing his vampire powers or merely a teenager in biology class. His looks and magnetism simply do not change. Edward-the-vampire and Edward-the-teenager are blurred, whereas Jacob the Native American friend and Jacob the werewolf are separated, neither of which is irresistible, as is Edward.

Further, Jacob is not created as a viable lover for Bella because his world and activities are outside of Bella’s life. Edward is fully integrated into Bella’s day-to-day teenage life, but Jacob’s world is separate from Bella’s. He lives on a reservation outside of Bella’s town, he goes to a different school, and he does not participate in any of her daily life activities. She must seek him out and often travel to see him. While Edward’s home in the forest is also not nearby, he nevertheless is with her on a daily basis. All this makes it quite easy to manipulate both Bella and the reader because with Edward, Bella cannot distinguish the beautiful boy from the beautiful creature who can provide her everything and who has a

²⁸⁵ WHEN HARRY MET SALLY (MGM 1989).

continuous role in her life. By muddling gorgeous Edward-the-vampire with gorgeous Edward-the-teenager in her high school every day, the reader is lulled into thinking Edward is the right decision.

Thus, Meyer emphasizes and glamorizes things that should be given less priority. Even more poignantly, by crafting Edward and Jacob so differently in their looks, their family backgrounds, and their socioeconomic positions, Meyer has—even if inadvertently—engaged in both stereotyping and a hint of discrimination as well: Edward the attractive, white, privileged male; Jacob a dark-skinned, Native American with far less wealth and privilege and with less emphasis by the author as to his looks and attractiveness to Bella. To the objective reader, these distinctions are indeed noticeable; to “Twihards”, they are likely unnoticed.

Choosing Jacob would allow Bella more freedom, not just in her romantic relationship, but generally. She would be able to stay in her own community, near her family and friends, and attend college if she wanted, or otherwise discover and establish her own interests and identity. She could still enjoy the excitement of the supernatural through the werewolves—minus any control and imprinting, of course—and their quest to protect the people in the community. Perhaps she might even somehow discover that she has ancestral roots in their Native American community and that she too possesses power to morph or has some other supernatural powers. She might even have such great powers that she becomes the leader of the pack and the first woman ever to do so. The possibilities are endless, and by choosing Jacob, Bella would be with someone who understands her and whose love would give her the freedom to discover herself, rather than define her.

2. Edward Is Lured Into Bella’s Human World.

Edward simply cannot fight the attraction he has to Bella. Though he has committed himself to a life without human blood, the reader knows that his attraction to Bella tests this commitment. To fight his urges, he flees Forks, but returns; he cannot help himself or be without her. Bella is likewise overpoweringly attracted to Edward and wants as well to be with him at any cost.

So why does it have to be Bella, the woman, who relinquishes life as she knows it and risks being charred alive to live eternally in Edward’s world? Why not find a way for Edward to give up his life, become human again and live in her world? They would not live eternally but their belief in an afterlife would certainly mean they would be together forever.

Here’s how it would look. Instead of making Bella weak with no interests, purpose, or passion, other than for Edward, Bella could be a woman who is very strong and independent and who possesses great interest and skill in *something* to which she wants to devote her human life. Perhaps it would be as a writer—she loves the classics—or perhaps as some kind of scientist or doctor. She would no longer squeal and squirm from the sight of blood but rather possess a life-long passion to science and for helping others. In fact, her passion could be so strong

that she refuses to give it up; she wants to go to college, to medical school and save lives, completely as a human. She does not want to be like Carlisle, a skilled doctor who has to constantly fight his urge to kill his patients.

But because Carlisle is a brilliant doctor, together with Bella and the world of fiction, they just might combine to find a way to make Edward human again and have him re-enter the human world. The process of looking for such a solution and the resulting fight with the Volturi would maintain the fantasy and climactic battle in *Breaking Dawn*. Moreover, besides the process of finding a way to make Edward human, the journey Edward would undertake to make this decision certainly would be very personal and indeed could be a romantic part of the story.

With such a plot, Bella does not have to be a child who lacks direction from her parents; she does not have to be isolated on the fringes of the human world with no friends or desire to socialize as normal teens do. She does not have to be awkward, clumsy, or accident-prone. She would *not* be a character in need of protection or rescue. Nevertheless, like many other humans, she would be seeking true love, a life-partner and, at the same time, fulfilling her own goals. With this plot, both Bella and Edward would be equally strong characters. The “love story” or fantasy would not have to suffer, but Bella would be a more deserving role model without the foibles that make her a perfect victim for control and violence.

3. Bella Has Become A Vampire But Realizes The Decision To Do So Was Not Her Own And Wants To Become Human Again.

In this alternative, Bella, instead of Edward, seeks to transform back into a human. After living for a while as a vampire, Bella could realize who she has become was completely defined by Edward, the vampire society, and the power they exercised over her. She may feel isolated and alone, and she yearns for her human world, her human family, her human relationships, and her human foibles, too. She longs for a second chance in the human world to find who she is or could have been.

This alternative would bring its own difficulty. At home, Bella’s longing would likely cause problems in her relationship with Edward and the other Cullens. Though she may love Edward, she needs to return to her prior life and find out who she is or could have been as a human, without Edward’s influence. The Cullens’ love for Bella bring them ultimately to understand Bella’s need to discover herself, and Carlisle could help Bella find a way to transform back. Though it may be difficult for Bella and Edward to raise their child when Bella returns to being human, Bella could insist on defining herself. Fortunately, because Renesmee is half-human, she can exist in both worlds, and Bella and Edward could arrange for her to be with each of them.

This alternative could be complicated further if the Volturi find out that Bella will be raising the half-vampire child in the “human world,” even if only part-time. This revelation could nevertheless cause a war among the vampires. Hence,

2014]

TWILIGHT

93

this alternative can be told with just as much fantasy, fun, drama, and supernatural powers as the original story, but without exerting control or violence over Bella and allowing her to make decisions from a position of strength and with self-esteem of her own.

4. Bella Chooses Edward, Becomes A Vampire, And Lives Happily Ever After But She Has Different Life Circumstances, And There Is No Control Or Violence.

The same story can be told without making Bella a damsel-in-distress in desperate need of protection and rescue. The following elements of the story could be eliminated or tempered: Bella does not have to come from parents who cannot care for her. Bella does not have to be isolated, awkward, clumsy, lack friends, and social skills. Bella does not have to be frequently injured. Bella does not have to be unable to dance or play sports. She does not have to be physically plain until transformed by magic. She does not have to be consumed constantly with guilt and self-deprecation. She does not have to be devoid of all interests in life except being with Edward. Jacob does not have to be so remote and inaccessible. A relationship with Jacob should be explored more and not necessarily dismissed. Edward does not have to be so physically threatening and harmful to Bella. Edward does not have to be so violent during sex so that Bella is bruised, battered, swollen, and certainly Bella does not have to take pleasure in the pain or relish in the violence. None of these pieces were critical to the story, but all were critical to silent, harmful messages sent to young women readers who, like Bella, are seeking to discover their own confidence, self-worth, identity, and voice.

VI. CONCLUSION

Economic reality has shown us that when it comes to love, tradition sells. An old-fashioned love story such as *Twilight*, in which women have no more power to determine their identity than they did two centuries ago, has been proven to bring millions of dollars to the booksellers, to the box office, and to the author. However, if written by an inspired and passionate author such as Stephenie Meyer, certainly a romantic and enticing love story fantasy could sell, even if devoid of the elements of control, violence, illegal acts, and stereotyping that pervade *Twilight*; certainly a romantic and enticing love story can be written to include healthy messages for young women about self-discovery, independence, self-reliance, and the shaping of their own lives, without encouraging them to define themselves by the men who “love” them; and certainly a romantic and enticing love story could include friendship between mates and allow the co-existence of true love with female independence.

Stephenie Meyer indeed believes that *Twilight* and Bella Swan provide young readers with guidance and healthy role modeling about finding themselves and relationships. This Article seriously questions whether she has actually achieved those goals and suggests that albeit inadvertently, Bella Swan’s character

94 CARDOZO JOURNAL OF LAW & GENDER [Vol. 21:39

and decisions pose more disadvantage than benefit to the millions of teen readers who unfortunately mistake Bella as a heroine.