

'Twilight' attractive and divisive

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Most women have been conditioned to look at the stereotypical tall, dark, and handsome man as their primary love interest. Chiseled features and a toned physique are two common characteristics ladies dream about when they think of the perfect

partner. In the past two years, females of all ages, shapes and sizes have begun to require the opposite sex to be one thing: A guy who sparkles.

The "Twilight" phenomenon has created a whole new outlook for the vampires people once feared. Vampires were formerly beasts who stalked the night, praying on the blood of innocent victims, damned to an eternal life sentence that boasted fear and mystery. Now, vampires are beautiful and passionate, have the ability to sparkle in the sun as opposed to evaporating and can fall in love with humans instead of feasting on them. No longer do the "cold ones" have to worry about falling victim to Buffy the Vampire Slayer or never successfully forming a healthy, romantic relationship with their food.

"Twiards" are the "Twilight" saga's diehard fan base. Although the novels and movie series are predominately directed to young, teenage girls, the "Twilight" sensation has reached females of all ages. Elizabeth Swope, a successful 54-year-old lobbyist, cannot seem to get enough of the "Twi" line. "I absolutely love the books!" she exclaimed. "I can't wait for the next movie to come out! I already have my tickets!" On November 20th, fans everywhere will finally see the second cinematic experience of the four-part sequence. The "New Moon" movie has been highly anticipated since the release of the first "Twilight" film last year.

But what is the big deal and huge appeal for this hot concession? Sixteen-year-old Alex Pazich believes the main character Edward's "dreaminess" is why she loves the fictitious franchise so much. "He is so hot!" the high school junior declared. "My boyfriend will be just like him." Not to burst her love struck bubble, but her future companion cannot possibly be a vampire. A girl can dream, though, and girls all over the world are dreaming of their very own Edward.

The common addiction to the movement stems from the "ideal" relationship between the two main characters; a plain-Jane girl, Bella, and the ridiculously handsome vampire who loves her more than he loves his own afterlife. Tara Bencovic, a 33-year-old mother of two, appreciates the underlying idea the novels bring up, that a girl does not have to be a supermodel to find the perfect man. "I really liked the books not only because it is easy to picture and dream about the perfect love filled relationship, but because it gives young girls a positive outlook on the 'girl next door' image and the chance to feel good about being a normal person." Bella's character is clumsy and boring, but her quick wit creates a challenge for the insanely handsome and suave Edward, who is not used to being turned down. Bencovic's thoughts definitely well reflect the author's approach to the series: creating two completely opposite characters that fall in love despite their differences in appearance, lifestyle, background and, most importantly, diet.

"The best part is Edward Cullen and his family don't drink human blood," explains Kelly Zeck, a 24-year-old Penn State Harrisburg student. "They have trained themselves to only feast on animals so as not to kill actual people. They call themselves 'vegetarians'

as a joke because most vampires drink human blood." Just because the Cullen clan does not drink human blood does not mean they do not want to drink it. One of Bella's strong appeals to Edward is her "scent," because it is nothing like anyone else's. It is a good thing Bella does not own a dog in the book/movie because she would have been dead in the first two minutes.

Because of Bella's powerful odor—the good kind, apparently—and the fact that Edward cannot read her the way he can most humans, the two develop a romantic relationship with a ridiculous amount of sexual tension. Edward and Bella are the new Romeo and Juliet, and males everywhere could not be more sickened. "I cannot tell you how many

times my girlfriend told me she wished I was a vampire," gaged Cameron Johnson, a 23-year-old college student. "She always compares our relationship to Edward and Bella's relationship. I can't tell you how many times I've had to sit through that awful movie." Johnson also described how "lame" he found the saga's portrayal of vampires. "The author could have at least made them do something cooler than sparkle in the sun. That ruined it for me." Maybe for Johnson the sparkling was trite, but not for the millions of females who run into the sun with their men and wait for them to glitter and glisten.

Stephanie Meyer, the author of the beloved books, is said to have based the characters on a dream she had a few years ago. Now that her dreams have turned into reality, she is definitely the money-maker in the Meyer household. "Twilight" has ignited a craze for women the way "Star Wars" was been epic for men. From t-shirts to stickers, fan sites to role-playing games, lip gloss to candy, "Twilight" is a franchise that is making millions upon millions in revenue. With the exception of Twiards, people flinch when the word Twilight is uttered. Everyone knows what "Twilight" is and what it has done to the minds of women everywhere.

"I just can't get enough of it," 20-year-old Mackenzie Clark enumerated. "I have a 'Team Edward' t-shirt, a poster, and I belong to a fan site. I can't wait for 'New Moon' to come out!" Clark cannot wait, and neither can girls all over the globe. "New Moon" is based on the friendship of Bella and Jacob, Edward's pseudo enemy, and their budding relationship after Edward disappears. Most Twiards are on "Team Edward," but quite a number of people are on "Team Jacob" as well.

Jacob does not sparkle, but his pecs are equally as rippled as Edward's, and his gorgeous face is just as chisled. Jacob happens to be a werewolf and everyone

knows werewolves and vampires are sworn enemies. Both Jacob and Edward vie for Bella's affection, but since Edward is the main character, his love prevails. Jacob's heart does not stay broken, but any Twiard knows that. Bella and Jacob remain good friends throughout the series, but let's face it; no girl wants to end up with a hairy guy, she wants a man who sparkles.

It is amazing how vampire creatures have evolved into incredibly good looking "vegetarians" from their original demonic, life sucking ways. The unfortunate truth that Twiards need to realize is that vampires do not exist and neither does "the perfect man." (Sorry, ladies!) Women cannot will their boyfriends or husbands into growing fangs, drinking blood or glittering. The most a gal can do is buy some shimmer enhanced lip gloss and give her man a few kisses. That is the only way a real man will be able to sparkle, at least for a few seconds before he wipes the goop off of his face.

