



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

Hugvísindasvið

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*Romanticizing the Villain*

**Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs**

**Íris Thelma Jónsdóttir**

**Maí 2010**

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## ABSTRACT

Vampires are becoming more romantic and Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Saga* is a good example of this. There is romance, passion, lust and forbidden love in her novels about a vampire that falls in love with a human. Romance between vampires and humans will be compared to the romance and passion in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. With the aid of Modleski's research into gothic novels and Radway's view on romance one is able to dig deeper into the concept forbidden love. Therefore, enabling other well known tales, which embrace similar fields of romance and love; as well the reader to see how this love can be seen in variety of tales, including romance, tragedy and horror. Connecting romance with vampires can be a bit tricky due to the fact that these novels have mainly been categorized as horror stories, where romance may not seem to fit in. With The *Twilight Saga* Meyer has taken a different approach. She has made her story focus more on the romantic side of forbidden love, rather than the lust and passion alone. Clearly, vampires are a popular myth, and have been through the years. That can be seen with famous tales such as the short story *Vampyre* by John Polidori, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker and *The Vampire Chronicles* by Anne Rice. *Dracula*, written in 1897, has especially made its mark on the literary world; it not only created the ultimate vampire villain, but also the many myths that are held in common knowledge. *Dracula* may not have been the first vampire tale that interested people but it can be argued to be the most popular. These myths are ancient and varying and as a topic are controversial. Meyer takes her vampires to a different level not only making them romantic and passionate but also compassionate. The main focus on the relationships between vampires and humans is to stress that this type of love is forbidden. This is all analysed with the help of theories on paranormal romance, gothic novels, and romance as are other tales with similar narratives where love is forbidden.

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## Introduction

One cannot choose who to fall in love with, whereas the decision whether to follow one's heart is one's own. Forbidden love is a love that is not accepted, for example by one's closest family or society in general. There have been a few novels on the subject of forbidden love between a vampire and a mortal. The following three are good examples; firstly, there is *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, a series of ten novels, the first being *Dead until Dark*. It focuses on Sookie Stackhouse, who is a telepath that falls in love with a vampire (Harris). Secondly, *The Vampire Diaries*, which are about Elena, a teenage girl and a vampire Stefan. They are drawn to each other but Elena does not know he is a vampire (Smith). Last but not least, there is *The Twilight Saga* by Stephenie Meyer which consists of four novels, namely *Twilight*, *New Moon*, *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn*. *The Saga* follows the complex relationship between Bella, a human and Edward, a vampire.

Not only can the passionate relationship between a vampire and a mortal be forbidden, it can also be dangerous for it is in the vampire's nature to drink human blood in order to function or survive. However, it must be kept in mind that forbidden love is not only written about in the supernatural genre, but also in novels about two mortals. *Romeo and Juliet* fits the paradigm of such love, where they were the children of arch enemies and therefore not permitted to be united in love. This kind of love can have tragic consequences or it can put things into a new perspective. This is the difference between two popular tales of forbidden love about young lovers, for *Romeo and Juliet* would fall under the category of tragedy seeing that they both die in the end. The *Twilight Saga* takes another turn and brings not only a happy ending but also offspring, enticing the reader the possibility of continuance. Meyer did not look to other vampire novels to find their weaknesses and strengths, she created her own variety of vampires: "So I didn't cut out fangs and coffins and so forth as a way to distinguish my vampires; that's just how they came to me" (Bookstories). There is not just one script to follow concerning this type of love; there are numerous tales of romances where forbidden love is entailed in different ways. Meyer likens her *Twilight Saga* to romance rather than horror, "I've never considered *Twilight* a horror novel" (Bookstories), noting that she was inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, when writing the *Twilight Saga*.

Whilst admitting that *The Twilight Saga* is within the romance genre it can also be described as paranormal romance as well as a Gothic novel. *The Twilight Saga* is more romance than suspense, for its main theme is the relationship between a human and a vampire and the conflicts that follow such love. *The Saga* raises the vampire figure to a new level, because in *Twilight* the vampires are significantly different from the ones encountered in other novels or myths. The leading vampires in *Twilight* do not feed on human blood since they want to mingle with human society. One gets the feeling that Meyers has created a type of vampire which lives parallel to humans in that they exist within the norms of society yet they are hunters by nature. The same could be said of the vampires within their own species. In contrast with the vampires in *Twilight*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, John Polidori's *Vampyre* and Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* are about vampires that feed on humans. These stories are categorized as horror and when comparing them with the modern day vampire in *The Twilight Saga* Meyer attempts to makes her vampires more likable. The reason may be that Meyer notes how her tale is influenced by Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters (Hachette). In fact, "the plot is closer to *Jane Eyre* than *Dracula*, with a heavy dose of *Romeo and Juliet*" (Allen-Mills). Meyer admits to reading works by Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters regularly therefore it is no surprise to see the romantic influence, since her view of romance might parallel the view her readers have (Radway, 69). Comparing them, it can be seen that the similarities between *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Twilight Saga* are great, mainly in the sense that they both involve young lovers who are forbidden to be together but take their chances for love. Their love is so intense they are willing to die rather than live without one another. Therefore, true love can be sensible and romantic as well as passionate and forbidden.

## 1 Vampires – The Myth

The definition of a vampire by *Collins English Dictionary* is “a corpse that rises nightly from its grave to drink the blood of the living” (Collins). Further specification is an immortal that drinks human blood but there are different myths about what defines them. In the book *Vampyres*, Christopher Frayling writes about how:

“...traces of vampirism are to be found in most cultures. Attempts to trace the origins and development of the vampire myth have seldom been successful. Montague Summers succeeded only in showing how difficult it is to define the characteristics which exclusively belong to the vampire” (Frayling, 4-5).

Freyling focuses mainly on the tales of Lord Ruthven in *Vampyre* and *Dracula*, the works of John Polidori and Bram Stoker which are considered great inspirations for other vampiric tales. Many stories have been written about vampires and their origins but John Polidori’s short story *The Vampyre*, published in 1819, is believed to be “the first full work of fiction about a vampire written in English. It is considered by many to be the foundation of modern vampire fiction” (Melton, xv). Polidori’s tale is about a vampire that is surrounded by people in awe of him, and women working to attain his affection. It is implied that the vampire, Lord Ruthven, fed only on women who were still virgins. Pure blood was what he sought. He married a virgin and after their wedding night she was found dead, having satiated the thirst of her husband who fled. According to Polidori “The universal belief is, that a person sucked by a vampyre becomes a vampyre himself, and sucks in his turn” (Polidori, xxi), but an important point is that in his story the wife is dead, not un-dead.

Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula* in 1897 and that novel has been somewhat of a foundation on which other writers build their vampire characters and stories. “Toward the end of the nineteenth century the novel *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker, initiated the era of vampire fiction that has continued to this day” (Melton, xv-xvi). *Dracula* remains to this day the ultimate vampire villain and Stoker is known for creating this one, significant character. As has been mentioned before there are several vampire traits that seem to remain universal through time, and some of them were originated in Stoker’s *Dracula*. The concept of a vampire having to lie in a coffin with native soil during the day, the requirement to be invited to enter a building, being able to change into a bat or other forms, and casting no reflection in mirrors are a few traits

worth mentioning. Author J. Gordon Melton took these traits further when he wrote *The Vampire Book*, an encyclopedia of the undead, where he takes the reader through the history of vampires, through chronology as well as miscellaneous information about vampires. According to Melton, “historians have taken pains to track down the real individuals who have been accused of being the original source of vampire legends” (Melton, xxx). Those individuals are believed to be Vlad Tepes, dating back to the year 1428 and Elizabeth Bathory. Interestingly, many different references can be found about the vampire myth, where, why, and how it began. However, in reality it is difficult to date exactly when myths that mention vampires or creatures similar to vampires began, as there are myths that go all the way back to Mesopotamia, where tales of female vampiric beings called Lilith, Lamashtu, and Lilitu who fed on the living can be found. Though myths about vampires can be found in most cultures and their tales from the past “the most well-known versions of vampire myth are those of the Slavic and Romanian cultures, which, due to their proximity, are surprisingly similar. Slavic and Romanian vampire myths have given rise to the most popular world-view of vampires” (Slone).

Summers writes repeatedly about myths and encounters of vampires in various countries. It is evident that Summers believed in vampirism as he writes in chapter one “vampirism was not unknown in Italy and in Greece of ancient times” (Summers, 1). He tells of how, in a chapter on Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia, a vampire is killed by a stake being driven through the body, and burnt to ashes. For added precaution the slayer puts garlic and whitethorns in the coffins of other bodies, although they had no trace of vampirism (Summers, 150). Another big part of the vampire myth is the act of killing a vampire, which can vary from one myth to another. Even though the stake through the heart is a well known myth in vampirism it is not present in all stories. Anne Rice for example, does not use the concept of a stake through the heart in her *Vampire Chronicles*. Vampires in her stories can only be killed by sunlight or burnt in a fire. Another example of how Rice differs from the upheld myth is that her vampire Louis prefers animal blood; “he feeds of animal blood for he despises the act of murdering a human for his own good” (Rice, 24). Rice’s traits are similar to the vampires in Meyer’s *Saga*, and several of Meyer’s main characters are vampires, namely the Cullens, who decide to live alongside humans and therefore drink animal blood to resist the temptation of the more pungent and satisfying human blood. As well as this similarity, the vampires in Meyer’s books can only be killed by being burned and decapitated, so they are, in contrast to popular myth, unharmed by garlic, dawn, crosses and stakes through the heart. Interestingly, the process of becoming a vampire can be different from one tale to

another. Rice's and Stoker's vampires drain the victim of blood and then the victim is made to suck its blood back from the vampire. Meyer uses the theme of the kiss of death in her saga; the kiss of death being when the victim is bitten, not killed, and the venom spreading will turn the victim into a vampire. Thus, the act of creating vampires seems easier in principle in Meyer's *Twilight Saga*.

## 2 Romance and Vampires

Though vampires are villainous characters they must also appear likable and sympathetic to the reader, therefore are romantic links to horror, for example lust, secrecy, passion, and longing. Polidori, Stoker, Rice, and Meyers have all used romance as the key to making their vampires both likable and sympathetic, often times the reader is filled with compassion towards the dilemma that vampires, in their books exist within. Meyer takes it a step further by making romance the main plot element. Janice Radway explains in her book *Reading the Romance* how a happy ending in a story is only a minimal feature for it to be identified as a romance (Radway, 170). Neither Rice or Polidori use a happy ending in their stories of the undead there is however, passion and romance throughout both stories. The romance in these stories is not like the beautiful romance between two lovers. It is more passionate and patriarchal, where the victim gives in to the vampire and even desires to become a vampire.

Polidori's *Vampyre* focuses on the vampire being an attractive and secretive one; all the women long for him while men long to be him. Romance was hidden in the subtlety of the taking of his bride and draining life from her. His lust for virgins exhibits his longing for innocence while the secret of his identity is mysterious and even romantic.

In Stoker's *Dracula* there is an element of romance but it must be noted that romance and courtship were directly linked when *Dracula* was written. Therefore, the romance is darker due to the fact that Dracula lives in the underside of society where as in *The Twilight Saga* the vampires exist parallel to humans. There are many elements of lust between Dracula and females in the story, not only with his three vampire brides but also his victims Lucy and Mina. The act where Dracula makes Mina drink his blood is very passionate rather than horrific; it is the ever dramatic kiss of death.

Rice brings forbidden love to her novel *Interview with the Vampire* with the insinuated unspoken longing between vampires Lestat and Louis. Another example of romance in the book would be that Lestat courts his victims as one would a lover. Rice gives Louis layers of compassion by allowing him to pity his victims and regret his actions. Louis can be described as too compassionate for a vampire; he despises killing humans to satiate his own thirst.

Romance is therefore not exclusively linked to love stories; it can be seen in horror though it may be hidden behind actions that are not traditionally considered romantic. The main element in such stories is the villainous vampire and its natural habits of killing humans to fulfill its own needs, but as has been noted before, the vampire needs to have some traits that show passion.

### 3 From Gothic to Romance

Tania Modleski is the author of *Loving with a Vengeance* a book about the mass-produced fantasies for women. It was first published in 1982 but a new edited version was published in 2008 to address the criticism it received from the first edition. Modleski looks into genres which are aimed at the female audience by going beyond mere content analysis. She writes about three forms of narratives, for example Harlequins and Gothic novels that focus on women's reading where the narrative Gothic novel is in the forefront. Not many theories have been written about these narratives although Gothic novels have been around since the mid 1700s. Interestingly, Jane Austen began her career by writing a Gothic novel, so there is no wonder Meyer is inspired by Austen and that her *Twilight Saga* is considered a Gothic novel (Modleski, 11). Modleski's narratives focus mainly on romance involving a heroine, it can however be said that the difference is "if Harlequin Romance may be called the 'hysterical text,' we could perhaps think of the Gothic as the 'paranoid text' (Modleski, 23). By this Modleski is referring to the Gothics having a heroine that is always on the lookout for any of the hero's emotional temperature or facial expression where she could detect possible threats to her own life. Bella may not fear her own life, but interacting with a vampire gives her a reason to look for facial expressions. For example, "the paranoid individual faces physical persecution (as in dreams of being attacked by murderous figures)" (Modleski, 73) and this can be related to all of Bella's dreams in *The Twilight Saga*. Bella could be clairvoyant to a certain point, due to the fact her dreams seem to be realized later in the story. Within Gothic tales there is usually suspense and the heroine finds herself being in love with a mysterious man, thus the heroine undergoes a transformation from love into fear, rather than fear into love like in the Harlequins. *The Twilight Saga* can be categorized as a Gothic novel for it takes into account the heroine falling in love with a mysterious being as well as the love growing into fear because of the events which occur once the heroine has fallen in love. Another twist to *Twilight* that qualifies it as a Gothic is that "'pure Gothics' almost always have 'a handsome, magnetic suitor or husband who may or may not be a lunatic and/or murderer'" (Modleski, 53) and Edward Cullen could easily be described in similar terms in *The Twilight Saga*.

Meyer's *Twilight Saga* is not only a Gothic novel, but also a paranormal romance. The "paranormal romance is a romance with paranormal characters and events" (Arthur), which means it has the same build up as romance novels except for one differing factor; the main

characters are not human. It is a subgenre of the romance novel; it focuses on the romances but fantasy worlds are woven into the story. Thus, the story entails more fantasy suspense than regular romance novels. In her study on American women readers of romantic fiction, Radway looks into romance. Her book was first published in 1984 but due to the change on the academic scene a new introduction was added in 1991. Radway talks of different types of romances and what readers favor in romance fiction. According to her, romance can be defined as a list of things, in particular three which are; “A happy ending; a slowly but consistently developing love between hero and heroine; and finally some detail about heroine and hero after they’ve gotten together” (Radway, 67). Radway also mentions in the same list “a very particular kind of hero and heroine” All of these traits listed can be seen in *The Twilight Saga*, noting the love there is not slow for it evolves rather rapidly from friendship into love. Meyer’s *Twilight Saga* may be more on the romance terms but since the leading character is in love with a vampire the novel falls under the category of paranormal romance. The tale is in fact the perfect paranormal romance since it has all of the elements; it is about a romance between a human and a vampire, as well as having a love triangle where a werewolf is involved. The ideal romance, according to Radway, is when the author “works hard to maintain that love of one individual for the unique personality of another must and does precede its embodiment in sexual expression” (Radway, 170). Meyer is quite good at eluding to the sexual tension in her novels although it is never described in detail; the reader feels the tension rise but at the height of the excitement needed depends on his/her own imagination. It could be argued that *The Twilight Saga* is the perfect romance, for it is not too explicit although it contains enough passion to keep it interesting. There is beautiful love between two beings, one human and one a vampire. To make it more enticing Meyer’s adds to this relationship another supernatural being, a werewolf who is friends with the mortal and enemies with the vampire, one complicated love triangle. *The Twilight Saga* focuses mainly on romance, rather than suspense which is just added as spice to build up excitement and keep the reader on his/her toes. When putting the main character Bella in a dilemma by adding a love triangle to the plot, there is the extra thrill to the story since both Edward and Jacob are cast to be villains as well as perfect boyfriends. In Gothic novels men can be divided into “two categories: the Super-Male and the Shadow-Male, the former almost always the apparent villain but the real hero, the latter usually a kind, considerate gentle male who turns out to be vicious, insane and/or murderous” (Modleski, 71). It is not so palpable which category Edward and Jacob fall under, because although they are nice to everyone except each other, they are both murderers by nature as well as heroes. They go all out to protect Bella and

therefore they kill the enemy that could harm her. They both love her unconditionally and the tension is apparent through the tale.

There is a happy ending in Meyer's saga and does it fall under the paranormal romance as well as being a Gothic love story. Main points in those two categories are happy endings, although "in Gothics the concern is with understanding relationship and the feelings involved once the union has been formed" (Modleski, 53). Gothic and paranormal novels often contain vampires and even though they have been a part of the literary field through the years they are on the rise now. In novels involving vampires, *Dracula* is often considered the ultimate villain, this of course being novels categorized as horror rather than romance. Meyer has been able to change this image and has made some of her vampires romantic and compassionate. To make her *Saga* fall under the romantic category Meyer had to make her vampire able to interact with the humans in a way different than most vampire novels. Meyer turned the vampire into a lover who will not feed on his love interest, but actually love and care for her. By doing this Meyer is able to capture the true romance in her novel and draws heavy comparison to Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* as well as *Pride and Prejudice*. These stories all include love being forbidden and a love triangle. In comparing Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and *Twilight*, one comes to understand how true love can make people do the most absurd things. It can be about revenge or crossing the limit when it comes to ones you love (Thompson). Furthermore, with Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* it is possible to draw similarities between the logic and emotion that make up the main plot in the two novels. Bella makes her decisions by trusting her heart while Edward is the sensible one and tries to make Bella see the logic in their relationship. Elinor in *Sense and Sensibility* suppresses her own emotions for the sake of the family and others (Austen), much like Edward. To summarize, they all tell the tale of how complicated love can be.

## 4 Romeo and Juliet

The tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare is based on the poem “*The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*” by Arthur Brooke. It is a love story between two young teenagers in Verona, Italy, whose families are enemies and their love is therefore forbidden.

Romeo Montague attends a ball at the Capulet’s house, where Juliet Capulet resides. She catches Romeo’s eye at the ball. He kisses Juliet and learns too that she is the daughter of Romeo’s father’s arch enemy. Later that same night Romeo goes to Juliet’s window, where he sees and speaks to her with beautiful words, but she has not noticed him yet. Then Romeo hears her speak of him, “O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name, or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love and I’ll no longer be a Capulet” (Greenblatt, 891). What Juliet means by this is that she wishes Romeo was not a Montague for she loves him too. At this romantic encounter Romeo tells Juliet that he is already willing to die if he cannot have her love, for he would rather die there at his enemy’s house than never be loved by her, his Juliet. At her house, Romeo asks Juliet for her hand in marriage, she answers yes. In all this romance, it is worth mentioning that Juliet is only close to 13 years old yet, she is to be wed to Paris, a very wealthy man. Her parents have decided Paris will be hers if Juliet is willing. Paris is already in love with Juliet, and now she is trapped in a love triangle, one she has no desire to be in.

After the encounter with Juliet from the balcony, Romeo goes straight to his priest, Friar Laurence, and tells him about this beautiful daughter of Capulet. Romeo informs the Friar that he is to be wed and wants him to marry them later that same day. The Friar is not so pleased with this, thinking this arrangement is too hasty, but when convinced by Romeo that this is true love he agrees to marry them. Seeing that Romeo and Juliet plan to be married so swiftly, the Friar tells Romeo just before Juliet arrives, “these violent delights have violent ends, and in their triumph die like fire and powder, which as they kiss consume. Therefore love moderately. Long love doth so. Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow” (Greenblatt, 903). What he means is that they do not need to haste in love. They are young lovers who are irrational in their actions and should listen to those who are wiser. Later, Romeo avenges his friend who was killed and this causes uproar within the two disputing families. The prince decides to exile Romeo, he shall leave in haste and if he is found, that hour will be his last.

While this is happening, Juliet is at her house, waiting impatiently for her lover. She speaks of her love as, “lovers can see to do their amorous rites by their own beauties; or, if

love be blind, it best agrees with night” (Greenblatt, 908). Juliet awaits Romeo, when her nurse enters and brings news of Romeo being banished. His banishment saddens her because that is like death to her. Juliet bids her nurse to go and find Romeo and bring him back to her, for his last farewell. Romeo hides at Friar Laurence’s house and like Juliet thinks of banishment being worse than death, even answers his friend, “ha, banishment? Be merciful, say ‘death,’ for exile hath more terror in his look, much more than death” (Greenblatt, 911). He believes that Verona is heaven since that is where Juliet is. This marriage has only lasted a few hours, and already there is trouble in paradise. Romeo leaves to comfort his wife and they consummate their marriage, and in the morning, he must leave in haste. Later that same day, Juliet gets news from her father that she is to be married to Count Paris. Juliet tries to tell her father that she does not want to marry Paris but her father informs her that she will be disowned if she does not obey. She flees to Friar Laurence for advice as to what to do. The Friar decides to help Juliet and gives her a potion that will slow her heart, take away her breath and make her body stiff for twenty-four hours; therefore, she will be considered dead by her family. The Friar tells Juliet that he will send a letter to Romeo about this scheme and when she wakes again, they can elope and be together forever. Unfortunately, Romeo does not get the letter but hears of Juliet’s death from his friend so he retreats to her family’s tomb, where she is laid before she will be buried. Count Paris is there and is displeased with Romeo’s presence so he draws up his sword, Paris is slain and Romeo grieves for his wife. At that moment Romeo decides to drink his poison, the one he bought after he learned about Juliet’s death. Juliet wakes up and upon seeing Romeo lying dead next to her; she takes his dagger and kills herself. Here ends the love story of *Romeo and Juliet*, or as in Shakespeare’s own words: “For never was a story of more woe, than this of Juliet and her Romeo” (Greenblatt, 939).

It can be fatal when a message is not delivered; in *Romeo and Juliet*, the message not being delivered to Romeo about Juliet faking her death is the end of Romeo and therefore Juliet kills herself. In *The Twilight Saga*, Edward receives a message through assumption that Bella has died and seeing that he will not live without her, Edward attempts to end his existence. In fact, one night when Edward and Bella were watching the movie *Romeo and Juliet*, Edward tells Bella, “well I wasn’t going to live without you” (New Moon, 368). In Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* as well as Meyer’s *Twilight Saga* the message between two lovers is what defines their fate.

## 5 The Twilight Saga

*Twilight* is the first book in the series and focuses on building the foundation for this romantic saga between Bella and Edward. *New Moon* emphasizes the emptiness and longing Bella experiences when Edward is forced to leave her. *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn* bring the relationship between Bella and Edward to its climax; taking the young lovers through many obstacles which only deepen and evolve the romance.

Bella Swan is not like any other teenage girl; she seems to attract the supernatural when it comes to love and passion. She moves to Forks, a remote town in Washington State, USA, where it rains heavily and the sun rarely shines. Meyers's vampires would have to reside in this type of climate and environment in order to continue their existence without having to hide from the sun. Bella faces a lot of change moving in with her father in Forks, due to the fact that she moves from the sunny and warm climate in Phoenix, Arizona. Not only does she face the change of having begun an unbelievable journey she may never have dreamed of; she falls in love with a vampire, becomes entangled in a love triangle with a vampire and a werewolf, comes close to death several times and ends up becoming a vampire, and gives birth to a vampire child.

### 5.1 Twilight

In the book *Twilight* Bella notices Edward Cullen in high school on her first day. Unfortunately for him, she is his weakness as well as his love; he just does not realize the latter yet. Bella attempts to figure out this character Edward, but he is distant and this makes him very appealing. She notices him in class, "he stared at me again, meeting my eyes with the strangest expressions on his face – it was hostile, furious. I'd noticed that his eyes were black – coal black" (*Twilight*, 20). This is a good example of the Gothic novel, for she is looking for any emotional temperance as to try to know him better (Modleski, 25). She cannot quite put her finger on it, but she feels like Edward is avoiding her. To exhibit Edward's side of *Twilight* Meyer wrote *The Midnight Sun*, which is still an unpublished draft. Edward speaks of how difficult it is for him to be around Bella and her scent, "I was a vampire, and she had the sweetest blood I'd smelled in eighty years" (*Midnight Sun*, 10). His actions demonstrate prevention, which is exactly what he is doing, for his sake as well as Bella's. This illustrates how Edward is different from others; therefore fitting into the genre of a classic Gothic novel for he is mysterious and dangerous (Modleski, 51). What Bella cannot understand is that her scent is in fact making Edward doubt his strength because he is close to

losing his forbearance towards her. The reason behind his behavior is that he is actually a vampire. Though he does not feed on humans he is close to breaking that rule because of Bella's prominent scent, which according to Edward is like no other, at least to him. She attracts him in a way no other human has, and to make matters even worse for him, he cannot read her mind, making her the only one immune to that unique trait of his. Edward does not know how to approach Bella, for he is not entirely sure it is safe. He wants her blood because it smells so sweet; but continues to fight his urge since it could cost him and his family their secret. Bella is contemplating what it is about Edward that keeps her so intrigued yet amazed for he is rather bizarre in his manner. When probing about him and his family she finds out "he doesn't date. Apparently none of the girls here are good-looking enough for him" (Twilight, 19). Edward's struggle with himself and his self control is ongoing until he gives in and decides to get to know Bella by talking to her. He is discovering a new role, somewhat that of a protector with a need to ensure she is safe. He saves her life several times throughout the story, but the first time is such a spur of the moment that he is not able to hide his strength or speed, which are characteristics of the vampires in the novel. From that moment on, she knows without a doubt there is something different about him even if he will not admit to it.

Edward's family, the Cullens, knows about his feelings towards Bella. They only drink animal blood like him, in that way they can function around humans and lead a peaceful existence within society. There are a variety of feelings within the family towards Bella; some of them are happy for him finally experiencing the feeling of longing, and there are others that despise him for getting too acquainted with a human. Those who are afraid think this will put them in jeopardy and that they will be forced to move out of Forks. Edward's and Bella's relationship develops with each day, and while she keeps pushing him about his secrecy, he is not ready. Once after saving Bella, Edward tells her how he followed her by listening to the thoughts of her friends. Even though Edward wants to keep Bella safe from others, he confesses that she was in danger from the moment he first saw her, "Your number was up the first time I met you" (Twilight, 152). Despite that announcement, she does not fear him.

Edward often forgets how observant she is about him, for example noticing changes in his eyes, "You're always crabbier when your eyes are black – I expect it then. I have a theory about that" (Twilight, 148). He wonders how close she is to the truth. When Edward questions Bella about her thoughts on him being so different, she comes up with several theories but one in particular: that he is a vampire. Bella had been informed about the cold ones, i.e. vampires, and werewolves by her friend Jacob Black who lives on Quileute Reservation La Push, where vampires are not welcome. His tribe, the Quileutes, is believed to be descended

from werewolves and the cold ones are their enemies. She begins to count all the factors that make Edward different and though she is not certain about him being a vampire, she is positive he is something more or other than a human. Her suspicions are confirmed when she touches him, because his skin is cold and hard like stone. From the moment Bella touches Edwards' hand he knows that she is something else too. He wants to answer all her questions, to have Bella know what he is, to know him. Though it is not revealed in their conversation that he is a vampire, it is obvious they both know. To a certain extent he does confirm her speculation by revealing to her that he does not sleep and has a different diet than hers. In addition to these distinct characteristics, Edward tells her he is dangerous, even though he abstains from human blood, and that she is not completely safe in his presence. Bella informs him that in his presence she feels safe, she is not afraid of him, more intrigued if anything and she does not care what he is. According to Modleski, "the basic premise of these mystery stories is that a good man is hard to detect; the solution usually involves the discovery that the man who had seemed most suspicious and unreliable is the real hero" (Modleski, 31). Edward may be a vampire but he is definitely the good man that is hard to detect. Eventually, after admitting that he does not want to be a monster, Edward decides to show her how different he is, because vampire laws, enforced by the powerful Volturi, prohibit him from sharing his secret with a human. If he were to go into the sunlight, he would risk being noticed as his skin reacts to sunlight differently than human skin, for it glitters like crystals. This characteristic in Meyer's novels is interesting in light of the fact that in most myths sunlight is believed to burn vampires and is therefore death to a vampire. In that moment, Bella is so close to him that his presence leaves her in awe. She is mesmerized by his golden eyes and his sweet, delicious smell which is unlike anything else. Vampires are in fact, according to Meyer's mythology, attractive to their prey, which makes it easier for the vampires to lure them in for the kill.

The romance between vampire and human has begun; it is as passionate as it safely can be, for Edward's strength can be fatal to Bella, as well as his thirst for her blood. This is one example of being Gothic, the concern to understand the relationship and the feelings involved (Modleski, 53). There are many obstacles in their relationship, such as their personal contact, he has to refrain from getting too passionate. If Edward would lose control and drink Bella's blood he would either kill her or turn her into an immortal; he is not willing to be responsible for either consequences. Being that they must act with caution, especially Edward, it does not read as natural romance. It is paranormal romance to its core, for he is a supernatural and she is human; they are not meant to be together in this world. She is his

sustenance by nature, but he has chosen to go against his nature. Thereby defying what seems to be a natural tendency in vampires and engaging in what can only be described as forbidden love. Edward seems to be able to control his longings, whereas Bella keeps losing her willpower when kissing him. It is enough for Bella to smell him to lose sense of her surroundings, “I smelled his cool breath in my face. Sweet, delicious, the scent made my mouth water. Instinctively, unthinkingly, I leaned closer, inhaling” (Twilight, 230). As was aforementioned Edward’s forbearance is similar to Elinor’s in Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*. At times Bella interprets this as rejection, though she wants to understand why he has to restrain himself so, she cannot fully comprehend the consequences. Bella refuses to acknowledge the danger he presents; she adores him and has too much faith in him. This danger is evident in Edward’s own words, “I’m the world’s best predator, aren’t I? Everything about me invites you in – my voice, my face, even my smell. As if I need any of that!” (Twilight, 231). Because of Edward’s candor and blatant honesty, Bella finally admits to the danger, risks, and intensity of this relationship. This is no simple teenage romance, it is very Gothic in nature and once she realized this, Bella allows herself to be afraid. At this stage in the story, their fascination for each other can no longer be hidden, and they publicly reveal their affections. This, however, does not change the fact that Edward is always fighting his urge to taste Bella when staying close.

Falling in love for the first time is special; falling in love with someone different only intensifies this, even making love unforgettable. Edward and Bella fell deeply in love with each other. Edward is aware of the risk of a relationship with Bella; the risk is always at the forefront of his mind, in addition to any danger he might put her in. Seeing that he puts her safety first, it is his opinion that she should find another lover, as painful as it would be. However, Bella would rather become a vampire and be together forever than lose Edward. Juliet made this same choice when she took her own life upon discovering her sweet Romeo’s corpse, forever linking their romance through death. Edward is put to the test when another vampire attacks and bites Bella. Edward can either save her from turning into a vampire, by sucking the venom out of her or allow her to die and turn into a vampire. He decides to save her, in itself a very difficult decision because it requires him to taste her blood, which he had been longing from the beginning. Battling his emotions, he must demonstrate immense strength and willpower when sucking out the venom. Edward’s decision to save Bella’s life proves that his love for her is stronger than his thirst for her blood. However, much to his dislike, Bella is disappointed that Edward saved her, for she wants to be like him. Edward assures her that his decision was based on love: “You are my life. You’re the only thing it

would hurt me to lose” (Twilight, 413). The bond that grew out of forbidden love has thus intensified to such extent that separating the lovers would prove both physically and emotionally unbearable.

## **5.2 New Moon**

Bella and Edward spend nearly every day together; he spends every night keeping her safe as he watches over her. Although Edward protects and watches over Bella she is still very much in danger, there are others out there and she is an easy target. Love can be strong but not always strong enough for one to risk the safety of their loved ones. A good example of this is when the Cullens decide to throw Bella a birthday party which culminates in her getting a paper cut when opening a gift. That single drop of blood is enough to arouse the monster instinct within Jasper Cullen. When Edward saves her, Bella notices the strain in Edward’s face which is probably because he is realizing that he has to leave Bella, for her to be safe. This event has a profound effect on Edward as his actions become rather odd. He stays with Bella that night as usual, and lies next to her, but his kiss has more passion and urgency than usual:

“The kiss began much the same as usual – Edward was careful as ever, and my heart began to overreact like it always did. And then something seemed to change. Suddenly his lips became much more urgent; his free hand twisted into my hair and held my face securely to his. And, though my hands tangled in his hair, too, and though I was clearly beginning to cross his cautious lines, for once he didn’t stop me” (New Moon, 45).

This kiss in addition to Edwards’s eyes and actions indicate to Bella that something is amiss. Her suspicions are confirmed when Edward informs her that he and his family are leaving Forks. This is Edward’s ultimate act of protection, and indeed his way of saving Bella, as he knows how much danger she will continue to be in while being romantically involved with him. He is acting as a father figure; because he makes the decision to leave her believing it is in Bella’s best interests, no matter how much it hurts him, and secondly giving Bella no choice in the matter: “You can go on with your life without any more interference from me. It will be as if I’d never existed” (New Moon, 63).

From the moment Edward walks out of Bella’s life, she is numb by choice in order to dull her overwhelmingly emotional pain. She lives through several months just existing, much to her father’s dismay. This emotional pain Bella feels can be associate with ‘separation

anxieties' which consist in Gothic novels (Modleski, 23). She realizes one day that whenever she is in danger she can hear Edward's voice. Acting on that realization, when she stumbles onto some old motorcycles for sale an idea comes to her; if she rides the motorcycles recklessly, maybe she will hear Edward again. She takes her motorcycles to her friend Jacob because he likes to rebuild cars. Jacob is her best friend and is unfortunately in love with Bella in addition to being a werewolf, the sole enemy of vampires. Her relationship with Jacob only complicates her love for Edward more, since Jacob is jealous of her vampire friend. Jacob accuses her of being a hypocrite, "Well, I'm so sorry that I can't be the right kind of monster for you, Bella. I guess I'm just not as great as a bloodsucker, am I" (New Moon, 270). Bella finds herself in a dilemma because she loves both Edward and Jacob although her love for Edward is deeper. Bella gives the possibility of being with Jacob some thought, "In so many real ways, I did love him. He was my comfort, my safe harbor. Right now I could choose to have him belong to me" (New Moon, 362). Even though Bella does not reciprocate his love as one would a lover, Jacob puts Bella's safety before anything else, as did Edward. Jacob is therefore able to form an alliance with Edward when they need to protect Bella from other vampires that want her dead. Bella finds herself again in a type of paranormal romance and realizes that supernatural beings seem to surround her bringing her to the conclusion that Forks is different from other places.

There is hatred between the two closest people in Bella's life, which is difficult for her, because she finds herself in the middle of an unusual love triangle and just wants to be close to them both. While Bella is realizing this, Alice, Edward's sister, returns to Forks and is waiting at the Swan's residence. Alice has returned because she had a vision of Bella attempting suicide, which was not the case. Actually, Alice wanted to make sure somebody was around for Charlie, Bella's father, when he found out Bella had died, and was she quite shocked to see Bella alive. Jacob was with Bella when she found Alice at her house. As a young werewolf, there seems to be too much fight in Jacob to be able to resist the killing of a Cullen, "There's no point in avoiding the truth. That's the way things are, Bells" (New Moon, 361). Jacob then answers the phone at Bella's house, and hung up before Bella could take the call. Jacob told her it was Carlisle asking where Charlie was, and Jacob replied that Charlie was at the funeral. However, it was not Carlisle on the phone, but Edward, and he thought when Jacob said 'funeral' that it was Bella's funeral. Edward thinks that Bella has died after Rosalie Cullen told him the purpose of Alice's journey. However, to complicate things, according to Alice, Edward is on his way to Italy to meet the Volturi. Bella remembers that when she and Edward watched the scene in *Romeo and Juliet* where the lovers die, he told her

“Well I wasn’t going to live without you. So I was thinking maybe I would go to Italy and do something to provoke the Volturi. You don’t irritate them. Not unless you want to die” (New Moon, 368). Following this discovery, Bella leaves for Italy with Alice, in order to find Edward before he kills himself. Mercifully, they are in time to save Edward from exposure. When they return from Italy, Bella and Edward rekindle their relationship and Edward promises her that he will never leave her again. He has proven to her that he cannot live without her, so now their journey can really begin. In order to be with Edward forever, Bella insists on becoming a vampire. Added to that, the Volturi let them leave Italy only on the condition that Bella will either become vampire or suffer death at the hands of the Volturi, who diligently uphold the law. Bella tries to use this fact as leverage when negotiating her fate with Edward. However, Edward is still reluctant for he does not want Bella to give up her life, which would mean losing touch with her family. Bella is firm in her decision fully understanding the consequences of becoming immortal; she wants to be with her true love forever. She realizes that, “The bond forged between us was not one that could be broken by absence, distance or time. As I would always belong to him, so would he always be mine” (New Moon, 465). Bella asks Edward’s family whether she should become immortal, where only Edward and Rosalie vote no. Due to the treaty where the Cullens are not to bite or kill a human, the Cullens cannot make Bella a vampire without violating the treaty and starting a war with the wolves. The dilemma that has become Bella’s life is very complicated if she does not become a vampire, the Volturi may do something drastic, if she becomes an immortal by one of the Cullens, Jacob and his pact will kill her and her vampire family because of the treaty. The forbidden love is therefore doubly forbidden after the trip to Italy, where uniting the lovers as equals will start a war with the wolves, and leaving Bella mortal will result in reciprocation on behalf of the Volturi. Meyer has therefore strengthened the theme of forbidden love with this turn of events, making it a very prominent theme throughout the rest of *The Saga*.

### **5.3 Eclipse and Breaking Dawn**

To sum up the relationship between Edward and Bella, they are happy and in love, while Jacob is left in the dark. There is tension between Edward and Jacob, throughout the novels, but they try to put their feud aside for the sake of Bella’s safety, for she is still being hunted by a vampire gang. Jacob and Edward join forces to protect Bella, and the vampires and werewolves make a truce. Together they are all going to battle the vampire gang to save Bella. Edward makes a deal with Bella about her becoming a vampire; telling her that he is

willing to change her if she will first become his wife. According to Modleski romance novels insist on the importance of the heroine's virginity (Modleski, 7), Bella loses her virginity when she consummates her marriage. Despite Edward being willing to change Bella, the treaty has not changed and Jacob does not let Edward forget about the consequences following the breaking of the treaty. The dilemma continues and Bella is angry with Jacob for doing this to her, because she longs to be a vampire. Bella is unsure of marrying at such a young age; however, they do get married and Jacob, in spite of being angry, attends the reception. He reminds Bella that if she were to remain human she could be with him, the main advantage being that Bella would be able to have a relationship with her father. Jacob is not ready to lose her to the other side, namely the vampires. After the ceremony, Bella and Edward go on a honeymoon, to a place called Isle Esme where they consummate their marriage successfully, except for a few bruises on Bella, because of Edward's strength. There Bella realizes that she is pregnant and is bearing a child that is half human and half vampire. This child nearly kills Bella while she is carrying because it is so strong and longs for blood. Jacob is not thrilled about this situation but remains loyal and close to his friend for support. During childbirth, Bella is closer to death than life; Edward must save her by allowing his venom to enter her blood stream. There, Edward takes the role of a hero; one of the Gothic traits, where the husband becomes the hero (Modleski, 71), although Edward has saved Bella several times, this was the one he tried to refrain from. Finally, Bella has become a vampire and her existence has new meaning, for not only does she have to battle the urges she has as a new vampire, but also learn to be around her child, who is half human and has blood running in its veins. Bella is a quick learner and has no problem being around her baby Renesmee or the human Jacob. This means that Jacob will be in Bella and Edward's lives forever, much to Bella's joy. With her vampire senses and strength, Bella is experiencing a new kind of love for Edward, "My old mind hadn't been capable of holding this much love. My old heart had not been strong enough to bear it (Breaking Dawn, 426). She enjoys his company and closeness better now because there is no vulnerability anymore. They are finally together as one without complications. Their love is no longer forbidden, but equal and right, this equality having grown out of forbidden love, which demanded sacrifice, suffering, and even pain, on both their behalves. Twilight contains the classic Gothic happy ending but according to Modleski, "popular Gothics resolve the conflicts through a fantasy ending" (Modleski, 76). Being paranormal romance it is undeniable that a tragic ending would not be fulfilling. Seeing that the novel is a fantasy the ending needs to be romantic and happy by turning the leading character into a vampire and therefore will she be united with her lover for eternity.

## 6 Forbidden Love

It is not difficult to draw comparisons between the love story of Bella and Edward and Romeo and Juliet. Both are stories of forbidden love where the *Twilight Saga* has a happy ending for the young lovers whereas *Romeo and Juliet* ends in tragedy. Other similarities between the two stories worth mentioning are, firstly the love triangle; Bella must choose between Edward and Jacob, where Juliet chooses Romeo over Paris. Secondly, the failed delivery of a message that will determine their fate, Edward is close to ending his existence, where as Romeo drinks poison to end his life.

Easy is not a known trait of forbidden love; there are reasons for it to be deemed forbidden. It can be argued that there is no alternative to love, either one falls in love or not. Where some people would settle for companionship or to please others, both Bella and Juliet follow their hearts, and are both willing to die in order to be with their soul mate. As mentioned above, there is a passage in *New Moon* where Bella realizes that Edward is going to end his existence because he thinks Bella has died. At that moment Bella remembers the time when they watched the movie *Romeo and Juliet* and Edward tells her how he would rather die than be without her. One could argue that Meyer is paying homage to *Rome and Juliet* by making reference to it in her novel, and even go so far as to say that she may have attempted to right the tragic loss of young love in *Romeo and Juliet* by allowing Bella and Edward to spend their eternity together. When looking deeper into Edwards's character it is possible to argue that he is more mature in thoughts and actions than Bella, for she is just discovering her first love as a teenager, allowing him therefore to somewhat control the course of this tale of forbidden love. Romeo, much like Edward, takes care of his relationship with Juliet with the assistance of the Friar.

## Conclusion

When comparing these two love stories, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Twilight Saga*, there is not only similarity between the lovers but the ending concerning the death of a person. In Meyer's *Saga*, death is turned into a happy ending where the lovers are united forever. Bella may get her romantic ending, the happily ever after with Edward, but in order to acquire that happiness her body dies and she leaves her regular life. This is romance, in comparison to *Romeo and Juliet* where their death is tragic; no ever after for them who had only had a little taste of love. In the words of Bella, "Edward had always thought that he belonged to the world of horror stories. It was obvious that he belonged here. In a fairy tale. And now I was in the story with him" (*Breaking Dawn*, 479). Death can therefore be a happy ending, because to Bella, becoming an immortal was the beginning of a new era where she is fulfilled with love. Therefore, Meyer has taken three types of popular narratives and made the ultimate love story which is comprised of everything.

The image presented of vampires has been horrifying through the years; therefore vampire novels have been categorized as horror. *The Twilight Saga* has transposed this image into a romance with a hint of horror. Vampires are evolving from being predators that thrive on the blood of humans to emotional beings who are able to fall in love and form relationships with their prey. There is great distance between Dracula and Edward; in fact the vampire icon has grown soft over several decades, who knows what the vampire will evolve into in the future. Has the romance between Edward and Bella changed the outlook on forbidden love? After reading *The Twilight Saga* one might conclude that love between such different beings may not be forbidden at all. Paranormal romance may change into being simply categorized as romance, where humans are free to interact with, procreate with and even marry the supernatural. Perhaps vampires will lose their image as evil and harmful and become romantic figures. Meyer created her own type of vampires and Edward is possibly the new role model for the role of perfect boyfriend. She has turned the vampire villain into the good guy. Because of his actions and power to restrain himself from drinking Bella's blood, he is not like the vampires in the old myths, "There is that sense that because Edward is such a self-restraining vampire, he's not really a vampire" (Yabroff). Vampires may become more romantic following *The Twilight Saga* and even fail to be categorized as gothic for they will lose their mysterious edge. Love may not be forbidden when seen through the eyes of lovers but it is true and they do say true love conquers all and it certainly did for Bella and Edward.

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