

twilight a-to-z

By Sally Dadisman
McClatchy-Tribune Information Services

Sink your teeth into "Twilight" with this basic A-to-Z guide to author Stephenie Meyer's vampire-related universe. If you haven't yet been seduced by the pop-cultural prowess of the "Twilight" book series (and subsequent film re-telling), it's not too late. The saga's second movie, "New Moon," is out Nov. 20. But take note: There are minor spoilers ahead.

ARIZONA. We'll start out our list in the same place as the books: Arizona. The book begins with Bella leaving her mom and the sunny Southwest for her dad's hometown of Forks, Wash.

BELLA. Bella Swan (bottom, center) is the human half of "Twilight's" heart, and also the novels' narrator. She keeps to herself, but quickly becomes the object of affection for many boys as the new girl at school. Played by Kristen Stewart in the movie franchise, Bella is also very accident-prone, stubborn and inquisitive, often getting into danger.

CULLENS. The Cullen "family" is Washington's very own vampire coven (there are many around the world). While not related by blood, the Cullens are a close-knit group.

Carlisle (right), the group's father-figure, is a doctor from the 1600s who "turned" (as they call creating vampires) people who were suffering and on the brink of death: "son" Edward (bottom, center); Esme, now Carlisle's wife; and "daughter" Rosalie (bottom, right). Rosalie later turned Emmett (bottom, left), who had been mauled by a bear (they subsequently married). Teens Jasper (bottom, right) and Alice (bottom, left), who met up with the family more recently, had been turned by other vampires (and also are in love). Because vampires stop aging after they are turned, the so-called teens, Edward, Rosalie, Emmett, Alice and Jasper, are stuck eternally as high school students. Jasper has assumed Rosalie's given surname, Hale, and they pose as adopted members of the clan.



DEER. The Cullens are vampire "vegetarians," meaning they don't eat people. Instead, they hunt for wild game in the woods. Edward's meal of choice is deer. Many think Carlisle and his clan just want to bond during their recurring "camping trips," in which they'll feed in the surrounding parks for a few days before returning to society.

EDWARD. Ah, Edward Cullen. The boy to which all "Twilight" fans' boyfriends will be forever measured against. Edward, played in the movies by the swoon-worthy Robert Pattinson, is known for his sensitivity and protectiveness. He's always looking out for and helping Bella, putting her needs before his, or anyone else's. He has been waiting for her for more than 100 years, after all.

FORKS, Wash. The majority of the action in all the books takes place in Forks, Wash., a real town. Stephenie Meyer found it after doing a search for the rainiest place in the U.S. The rain was crucial because in the "Twilight" universe, vampires don't go out in sunlight. Which leads us to ...

GLITTERING. Or maybe glistening. Or glowing. Whatever you want to call it, vampires' skin does it in the sunlight. Humans would be a bit suspicious of this, so the vampires skip school and work on the rare sunny days in Forks.

HUMANS. When not spending time with mythical creatures, Bella does have human friends at school. While popular boy Mike Newton crushes on Bella, friend Jessica crushes on Mike. There is also Eric (the nerdy one), Angela (the good friend) and Tyler (the funny, cocky one), among others. These characters ground the book, and along with Bella's dad Charlie, give Bella an escape from her sometimes crazy life.

IMPRINTING. Imprinting is like a very intense version of love at first sight. When wolves first meet their (pretty literal) soul mate, they imprint. This connects them wholeheartedly, protecting and looking out for this person for a lifetime.

JACOB. Jacob Black (below with Bella) creates a triangle for the Bella-Edward romance. A member of the Quileute tribe, Jacob is the son of Charlie's best friend, Billy Black. He becomes Bella's best friend, but the friendly feelings are one-sided as he tries to win her away from archenemy Edward. Where Edward is intense and brooding, Jacob is light-hearted and carefree.



KISS. The hardest part about dating a vampire? At any moment he could suck your blood. You've got to have a lot of trust — and he's got to have a lot of self-control. Edward and Bella make it work, and their kissing scenes are always fan favorites.

LION AND THE LAMB. "And so the lion fell in love with the lamb," is a popular "Twilight" quote, with Edward as lion and Bella as lamb. A Google search for the phrase gives a gaggle of Edward/Bella/"Twilight"-related hits, and fans even have it tattooed on their bodies.

IMAGES COURTESY OF
SUMMIT ENTERTAINMENT

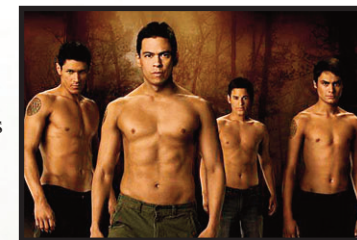
MIND-READING. All vampires have incredible speed and heightened hearing, but some also gain a special gift — an enhanced version of an existing gift from their former human life. Edward can read people's minds — except for Bella's, which intrigues him; Emmett is unbelievably strong; Alice can foresee what will happen if you make certain decisions; and Jasper can manipulate people's emotions, to name a few.

NEW MOON. The title of the second book, a new moon is when the moon is directly opposite the sun. Meyer says on her Web site: "This is the darkest kind of night. New Moon is the darkest period of Bella's life." The other titles: "Twilight," "Eclipse" and "Breaking Dawn" also refer to either moon/sun activity and lightness and darkness.

OBSESSED. Fans are obsessed with Edward. Fans are obsessed with Jacob. Fans are obsessed with wanting to be Bella. Edward is a little obsessed with Bella. Bella is a little obsessed with Edward. We could go on...

PORT ANGELES, Wash. Forks is a small town, so to go shopping, patronize book stores or dine at Italian restaurants, Port Angeles is where the kids go. It is the site of Edward and Bella's first unofficial date.

QUILEUTE. This Native American tribe lives in La Push, Wash., a coastal town outside of Forks. The Quileutes have a deal with the vampires, or "cold ones," that the tribe would not reveal them to humans as long as the vampires stayed out of La Push and refrained from feeding on humans. The Quileute tribe has a secret of its own: at a certain age, selected members turn into wolves. Sam Uley (center) is the pack leader.



ROBERT PATTINSON. We would be remiss not to mention the pop-culture phenomenon surrounding "Twilight" that is Robert Pattinson. His tousled locks send teen girls into a tizzy; even though he has mentioned in media interviews his lack of hair hygiene — sometimes going days, weeks without washing. Hair aside, fans love pondering rampant Stewart-Pattinson dating rumors. Life imitating art?



STEPHENIE MEYER. Let's not forget who created this world. Meyer, who lives in Arizona with her husband and three sons, has said the idea for "Twilight" came to her in a vivid dream. The author provided input into the movie versions of her books, even making a cameo in "Twilight."

TEAM EDWARD ... OR JACOB? Once you have given in to your inner 15-year-old, you must pick a side. There are those who remain neutral, but we say if Bella can choose, so can you.

URGES. Obviously vampires have urges to drink human blood — even "vegetarians" like the Cullens are tempted by a human's scent. But some urges are stronger than others. Bella's flowery scent is like Edward's "own brand of heroin," as he states in the first movie. That's how you know it's love.

VOLTURI. Based in Volterra, Italy, the Volturi is vampire royalty, laying down the law for the vampire world. Each member has been chosen for an intense, special power, which keeps them intimidating enough to rule, while helping to protect the world's vampire community.



WOLVES. The Quileute members "phase" into wolves from their human form; although often one doesn't get to choose when to phase. The wolves also have accelerated healing powers and while vampires are cold, wolves are known for running hot. They also can communicate by reading each others' minds.

X-RAY. Bella's clumsiness often gets her into sticky situations. After almost getting hit by a van in "Twilight," Bella is given an x-ray by the good doctor Carlisle Cullen.

YOUNG LOVE. And that's what it's all about, folks. The appeal of "Twilight" comes down to love — an intense love between Bella and Edward (and Jacob); familial love among the Cullens, Bella and Charlie. In the end, "Twilight" is a fantastical expression of young love at its finest.

ZEITGEIST. Love it, hate it or don't understand it, the "Twilight" phenomenon has contributed greatly to the recent vampire-loving cultural zeitgeist. While you can argue it started with Anne Rice and "Interview with a Vampire," the blood-suckers have become unavoidable on the pop-culture landscape.

SOURCES: WWW.TWILIGHTLEXICON.COM, WWW.STEPHENIEMEYER.COM, "TWILIGHT," "NEW MOON," "ECLIPSE," "BREAKING DAWN," ALL BY STEPHENIE MEYER

