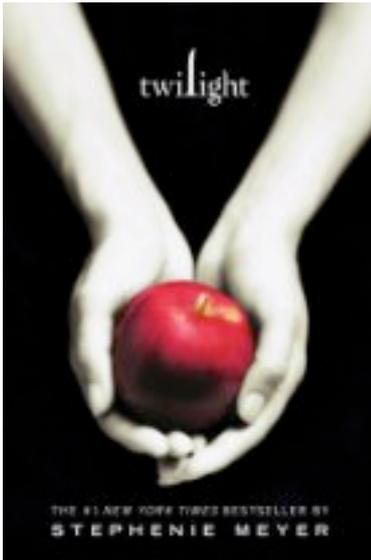


## [Twilight] Study guide one



### Synopsis:

Bella Swan decides to move to Forks Washington to live with her Dad, the chief of police, after her mother remarries. There she meets the Cullens; and it is Edward who first catches her eye. But there is more to the Cullens than meets the eye, they are a coven of Vampires. After a rocky start, Edward steals Bella's heart, and as a result she is in constant awe/dreaming/wishing/lusting over him. She is love struck. *"About three things I was absolutely positive. First, Edward was a vampire. Second, there was part of him...that thirsted for my blood. And third, I was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with him."* p170/1

Edward is attracted to (turned on) by Bella's blood, and finds himself feeling like a drug addict trying to control himself. *"It's not only your company I crave! .... You see, every person smells different, has a different essence...you are exactly my brand of heroin"* p2334/5 There is a love that cannot be, for if he gives in to his 'addiction' Bella will surely die.

Another vampire coven comes into Forks, quenching their thirst, and murdering innocent victims. These murders cause the locals to believe there are wild animals on the loose.

During a Cullen family baseball game, the new vampire coven in town (James, Laurent and Victoria) show up. As humans do not normally fraternize with Vampires, this visit puts Bella in grave danger (from James in particular). The Cullens end up caught in an action adventure, fighting to save the life of Edward's beloved, Bella.

Fearing for her mother's life, Bella falls for James' trick, and winds up close to death. But Edward (who has a habit of saving Bella's life) comes to rescue!

The sub-plot to this scary and forbidden vampire world; is the fantasy myth world of the Quileute's (Were-wolves). Bella's friend Jacob Black (who she has known since she was a child), is part of this tribe. Jacob shares with Bella some of the old myths and traditions such as, Vampires and Were-wolves are arch enemies. This helps Bella to discover who Edward really is.

The book ends with celebrations at the Prom. Bella is content and happy with Edward. She longs for the beginning of her new life with Edward to begin. She wishes that Edward would let her become just like him, so that they can be together forever. But Edward does not want to condemn Bella to the same fate as himself, and thinks his love should be enough. *"I love you more than everything else in the world combined. Isn't that enough?"*

### Themes:

forbidden love/desire/true love  
temptation  
insecurity  
power

safety  
identity

**Biblical links:**

Song of Songs (erotic poetry found in Bible)

**Questions:**

**1] Have you ever felt the way that Bella does about someone else?**

*“Today I was worse than usual because my head was so filled with Edward. I tried to concentrate on my feet, but he kept creeping back into my thoughts just when I really needed my balance.” p64 (See accompanying quote’s page)*

•What was it like? What’s so good about it?

**2] Would you like to fall in love with someone the way Bella does?**

**3] Why do you think we all want to fall in love? What is it about love that we all desire?**

Augustine says, “The single desire that dominated my search for delight was simply to love and be loved”

**4] Do you like the way Edward describes his love for Bella?**

*“It’s not only your company I crave! .... You see, every person smells different, has a different essence. If you locked an alcoholic in a room full of stale beer, he’d gladly drink it. But he couldn’t resist, if he wished to, if he were a recovering alcoholic. Now let’s say you placed in that room a glass of hundred-year-old brandy, the rarest, finest cognac - and filled the room with its warm aroma - how do you think he would fare then? ..... Perhaps I should have made our alcoholic a heroin addict instead...you are exactly my brand of heroin” ( p234/5)*

•Would you like someone to say that they are addicted to you?

**5] Did you notice how Bella is constantly down on herself, and cannot believe that Edward would desire her/want her?**

*“My stomach twisted as I realized what he must have meant. He must see how absorbed I was by him; he must not want to lead to me on...so we couldn’t even be friends...because he wasn’t interested in me at all.*

*Of course he wasn’t interested in me, I thought angrily, my eyes stinging - a delayed reaction to the onions. I wasn’t interesting. And he was. Interesting....and brilliant....and mysterious....and perfect....and beautiful...and possibly able to lift full-sized vans with one hand.” p67/8*

•Have you ever felt like that?

•Did you find Bella insecure in her feelings towards herself? Are they justified?

**6] Did you think Bella had her self-worth tied up in the way Edward thought about her?**

**•Do you think that it is okay to have your identity tied up in how someone feels about you (or the way others see you)? What should your identity be based on?**

**7] Would you like to have someone protect you and save you, like Bella does? Why?**

*"I wanted nothing more than to be alone with my perpetual saviour" p 144*

**•Why do you think we want this safety and protection?**

**•Would you like a relationship where you are the one who is always protected and made to feel safe by the other?**

**8] What do you think about the way Bella and Edward feel about each other? Do you think that's what true love is?**

**9] Reflecting on some worship songs (refer to some of the lyrics below), what do you think and feel about the language used?**

**My Jesus my lifeline - Tim Hughes**

My Jesus my lifeline  
I need you more than I've ever known  
There's no one quite like you  
I'm crying out for your loving

Oh Jesus oh Jesus  
I've never known a love like this before  
Oh Jesus sweet Jesus  
Accept this love I give to you

It's all I can do  
Sing a song of love to you

I'm searching I'm longing  
Please meet me just as you want to  
Cause I'll stand here to offer  
Offer up this song of love to you

**What a friend I've found - Delirious**

What a friend I've found  
Closer than a brother  
I have felt your touch  
More intimate than lovers

Jesus, Jesus  
Jesus, friend forever

What a hope I've found  
More faithful than a mother

It would break my heart  
To ever lose each other

•Do you find any similarities to way that Edward and Bella talk about each other?

•How do you feel about using such sexual language to describe your relationship with God?

•Is Jesus our 'boyfriend'? Is that what these songs are saying?

•Do you think we should have this kind of intimate relationship/love for Jesus?

**10] Do we find this kind of love and passion in the Bible?**

Read the following passages from Song of Songs, as well as chapter 4 and 5.

“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine.”  
Song of Songs 1:2

“My lover is to me a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts.” Song of Songs 1:13

Song of Songs, can be described as using sexual imagery to describe God's desire for humanity. (not just me)

•Is this the same/similar or different to the way Edward loves Bella?

•What can we learn from reading Song of Songs?

The Hebrew word for love “ahav” means to be filled with desire, delight and passion for the one we love.

Erotic language expresses our desire to love and be loved. To be known and had. In a way that is vulnerable and also ecstatic.

Notes for Leaders:

Passion and desire express our need to love and be loved, as Augustine said. It expresses our longing for connection and intimacy. Erotic and sexual language speaks of self abandon, and giving to another, as well as our desire to be known and to be had by another.

Kenda Creasy, Dean in Practicing Passion puts it this way:

“Passion communicates itself. For all its steamy connotation, eros is primarily a communicative impulse...The objective of intercourse is the communion of souls...  
Eroticism expresses our longing for mutual association...”

So the erotic could be said to be a symbol of the way we seek to know God as intimately as God knows us. (ie. through the incarnation of Jesus and his death and resurrection). This is quite different from equating the erotic with thinking that 'Jesus is our boyfriend'. Which perhaps lends itself to thinking that Jesus will make everything good and right, and will give us what we want, and make us happy and successful always. A love that is self-fulfilling. But rather the kind of love we actually see in Jesus (through his life, death and resurrection) is a self-abandoning and giving love, not a self-fulfilling love (a love that is all about me). This idea will be fleshed out further in study 2 (New Moon).