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Twilight

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

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Family matters prompt our narrator, 17-year-old Bella, to move from Mom's place in Phoenix to live with her Dad in small-town Forks, among the damp and misty woods of the American North-West. Back in Phoenix, Bella saw herself as a gauche nonentity, physically clumsy and bookishly shy. It is a mystery ? one never accounted for by the author ? why every red-blooded male in Forks High School is instantly smitten by the new girl in the senior class.

Though, as it turns out, one of those males is not red-blooded at all. Edward Cullen's ?porcelain skin, golden eyes and mesmerising voice? stem from the fact that ? there's no way I can conceal this ? he is a vampire. He's more than a hundred going on seventeen, never sleeping, never ageing, never eating. When needs must, Edward hunts in the wilderness, moving with the speed of the mountain lion which is his favourite blood donor. What makes him different from the run-of-the-mill vampire is that he and his adoptive family are committed to abstinence from human blood and to living peaceably among the good folks of Forks.

So this is not exactly an everyday slice of life at Sweet Valley High. But we still get a moment by moment, touch by touch account of star-cross'd young love; and there are countless moments and countless touches in a novel of 448 pages. For far too many chapters, little happens except slight shifts in a relationship which, it must be admitted, has more than its share of obstacles. These shifts sometimes repeat themselves in later chapters, as does Ms Meyer's vocabulary. Edward is forever ?smirking?, ?smiling his crooked smile?, ?grinning?, ?chuckling? (often ?darkly?) and, most irritating and unappealing of all, ?snickering?. Bella sometimes snickers too. Edward regularly ?takes [Bella's] face between his long hands?; and that skin, those eyes, that voice are repeatedly described in detail. Inevitably, despite Edward's protestations of Bella's stunning uniqueness, the power in this partnership is very much on his side, given his overwhelming talents and experiences. The longeurs and repetitions could surely have been edited; especially as, when excitement does break out in the last quarter of the book, the writing is taut with danger and menace. And there's always the intriguing question of how this particular Romeo and Juliet impasse will be resolved. Does Bella have a future with her passionate vampire lover? Will it end in a melancholy parting? A bloody tragedy? Mouth to neck resuscitation leading to a vampiric future together? We don't know until the final sentence. GF

Running Order:

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