



Fanpire: The Twilight Saga and the Women Who Love it

Tanya Erzen

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An author immerses herself in the frenzied fandom of Twilight, the young-adult vampire romance series that has captivated women of all ages

Twilight, Stephenie Meyer's young-adult vampire romance series, has captivated women of all ages, from teenagers who swoon over the film adaptations to college-educated women who devour the novels as a guilty pleasure. All told, over 110 million copies of the books have been sold worldwide, with translations into 37 languages, and the movies are some of the highest-grossing of all time. Twilight is a bona fide cultural phenomenon that has inspired a vast and unimaginably fertile fan subculture—the “fanpire,” as the members describe it.

Just what is it about Twilight that has enchanted so many women? Tanya Erzen—herself no stranger to the allure of the series—sets out to explore the irresistible pull of Twilight by immersing herself in the vibrant and diverse world of “Twi-hards,” from Edward-addition groups and “Twi-rock” music to Cullenism, a religion based on the values of Edward's family of vegetarian vampires. Erzen interviews hundreds of fans online and in person, attends thousand-strong conventions, and watches the film premiere of *New Moon* with Twilight moms in Utah. Along the way, she joins a tour bus on a pilgrimage to Twilight-inspired sites, struggles through a Bella self-defense class, and surveys the sub-universe of Twilight fan-fiction (including E. L. James's enormously popular “Master of the Universe” story, the basis for her erotic novel *Fifty Shades of Grey*).

Erzen also takes a deeper look at the appeal of traditional gender roles in a postfeminist era saturated with narratives of girl power. If Twilight's fantasies of romance and power reflect the fears, insecurities, and longings of the women who love it, the fanpire itself, Erzen shows, offers a space for meaningful bonding, mutual understanding, and friendship.

Part journalistic investigation and part cultural analysis, *Fanpire* will appeal to obsessed fans, Twilight haters, and bemused onlookers alike.

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