

# *A New Dawn*

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*Your Favorite Authors on  
Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Series*

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Edited by Ellen Hopkins  
with Leah Wilson



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## INTRODUCTION

### *To Twilight or Not to Twilight*

**Ellen Hopkins**

**T**read carefully, dear readers. There's a new vampire in town, and Edward Cullen is so not your mother's vampire. Okay, he does have a few things in common with more classic bloodsuckers like Anne Rice's Lestat. He's cultured. Insanely alluring. Downright dazzlingly sexy. Drop-dead gorgeous, in fact. (Sorry, couldn't help the double entendre, and you'll find more in this book. Authors just love stuff like that.) But what makes Edward so damn addictive is not his undeadness. It's his abiding humanity.

Okay, confession. I was at first dumbfounded by the success of *Twilight* and its sequels, *Eclipse*, *New Moon*, and *Breaking Dawn*. Oh, I've always understood the lure of the vampire. For many years I was, in fact, a dedicated horror reader. Stephen King and Dean Koontz were always at the top of my reading lists, along with classic authors like Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker, and Mary Shelley. When Ms. Rice came along, I devoured her books, much like her characters devoured their unsuspecting victims. If I could have faulted Rice's books, it would have been for their heavy descriptiveness, which at times overpowered the action. I preferred the pacing of

King, whose storytelling fascinated me on an instinctual level that I didn't understand until I became a writer.

You see, as writers, we often analyze the works we loved to read. What drew us to them? Why did they work for us? What kept us turning the pages? When I went back to consider why I loved Stephen King's books, it came down to one central thing. Character. Yes, he writes high-concept plots, but they evolve from character, something I strive to do with my own books. King is the master of character. He takes ordinary people and puts them into horrific situations. How they deal with them has everything to do with who they are as humans. King taps into the heart of us all—our shared humanity.

But what of this Stephenie Meyer phenomenon? She says she first pitched *Twilight* as a “suspense romance horror comedy.” What, exactly, is *that*? And why would *anyone* want to read it? I didn't think I did, and I resisted for a very long time. I never read books just because everyone else is reading them. Why start with this one? A first novel, five hundred pages, inspired by a dream and written in three months? To *Twilight* or not to *Twilight*? Definitely not.

And then I started to notice an interesting fact. Her readership and mine overlap. How could that be? I don't write horror (despite the fact that I once thought I'd be the next Stephen King). Nor do I write suspense, comedy, or romance. I write edgy contemporary fiction. I write about drugs. Suicide. Abuse. And not the kind of abuse that results from some undead being chomping into my protagonists. What could our books possibly have in common?

The only way to find out, of course, was to read them. And when I was asked to contribute to this anthology, it gave me the perfect excuse to do what I swore never to do—read Stephenie Meyer. I picked up *Twilight* with some trepidation. I had heard a lot about the book—both good and bad. I suppose all books have fans and whatever the opposite of “fans” is. (“People who don't like them” is awfully unwieldy. Antonym for “fan,” anyone?)

I have now read all four. Because I'm a writer, I likely read with a different eye than someone reading strictly for pleasure, and my opinion is surely colored by my own ideas about good writing and what makes a compelling read. Not to mention what makes characters interesting. Meyer, an English lit major, has said her favorite author is Jane Austen, and there is an evident Austen flavor in Meyer's writing. Her storytelling flows like a slow, steady stream, its bank lush with adverbs and adjectives. Closer to Rice than King, and definitely nothing like my own spare style, which is more a hailstorm, eroding modifiers from the page. Nope. No crossover appeal there.

Well then, how about our heroines? Meyer's Bella is flawed, and certainly, so are my female protagonists. Not a solid one in the bunch, and like Bella, all make poor decisions along their journeys. But Meyer, who has called her teen self a "regular good girl," writes her Bella as a regular good girl, too. When wronged or hurt, she tends to flee, or to withdraw into some inner sanctum where others can't touch her. I prefer to write about "irregular troubled girls." Though all of them are decent at their cores, when forced to react, they are much more likely to exact revenge than to suffer in silence. If Meyer's readers love Bella, how then can they be drawn to the young women in my books? Hmm. Quite the conundrum.

That brings us to our leading men. Meyer's readers seem to have formed two fan clubs: the Everything Edwards and the Just Jacobs. From the start, Jacob is clearly the underdog (underwolf?), but his "pack" loves him every bit as much as the other camp adores Edward. Both characters might be categorized as "beautiful bad boys with big hearts." I've definitely got a couple of those in my books. But I've also got beautiful good boys, and bad boys with miniscule hearts. So no, our heroes, if you can call them that, don't have all that much in common. What, then, is the collective draw?

As I read the essays in this book, certain words and phrases kept popping up. Love. Romance. Unrequited romance. Longing. The

search for belonging. Seduction. Obsession. Connection. Lack of connection. Love. Forgiveness. Passion. Fear. Fear of growing old. Love. Finally, something clicked. My books have all those elements, too. And those things go straight to the heart of us, as people. Meyer's books and my books do have something very basic in common. They speak, as Jane Austen's and Stephen King's books do, to our shared humanity.

If you ask someone what *Twilight* is about, chances are, they'll say "vampires." *New Moon*? Werewolves, of course. But if you take a good, hard look at Edward and Jacob, both are more human than monster. They long. Fear. Obsess. Seek connection. Most of all, they love, and their all-encompassing love for Bella is the kind of love every human being instinctively seeks. Stephenie Meyer's books are not about monsters. They are about people finding forever love, something that resonates not only with her readers and my readers, but all readers. For by opening those stunning book covers, we become immersed in Edward and Jacob's love for Bella and we absorb it, page by page.

And who doesn't need a little more love?

# A Very Dangerous Boy

Susan Vaught

Fangirls, close your ears. You may not want to hear this. But your favorite vampire—that's right, Edward Cullen—may very well be a sociopath. You will probably have something to say about this diagnosis, but Susan Vaught makes a very good case for Edward's potential Antisocial Personality Disorder. From his impulsivity to his homicidal tendencies, the dangerous Mr. Cullen displays six of seven personality traits common to sociopaths, and it only takes three to qualify. A psychiatrist would likely have little problem affixing the APD label. Except, perhaps, if she were a fangirl?

[NOTE: Please read *entire* essay before pressing <SEND> on the hate-mail!]

I'm the world's best predator, aren't I? Everything about me invites you in—my voice, my face, even my smell.

—EDWARD CULLEN, *TWILIGHT*

**E**dward Cullen.

Yes, I know, every fangirl in the *Twilight* universe just squealed at the mere mention of his name. And what's not to love?

He's powerful. He's rich. He's romantic. And, as he notes in the quote above, he's thoroughly enticing in every possible way.

He's also a predator, just like he says.

For the first three books in the Twilight series, Edward Cullen is a dangerous, bloodthirsty predator at constant risk of murdering the girl he loves. In the fourth book, after he spends several days conspiring to kill his unborn child, he finally does take Bella's life. More specifically, he rams a needle full of vampire venom into her heart, then uses his teeth to keep filling her with venom in the most brutally efficient fashion imaginable.

On the basis of that act alone, our sweet, beautiful Edward would probably qualify for a diagnosis of Antisocial Personality Disorder—which is a clinical way of saying SOCIOPATH. As in dangerous, homicidal monster without a conscience.

Now, before all the screaming fangirls I previously mentioned come roaring after me with torches, pitchforks, and other implements of torture and destruction, let me make my case—or fail to make it. Give it some thought, as Bella *should* have done, before giving Edward her heart—um, literally.

In order to be diagnosed with Antisocial Personality Disorder (Sociopath! Sociopath!), Edward would have to meet at least three of the seven criteria, so let's start at the top: **failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors as indicated by repeatedly performing acts that are grounds for arrest.**

*What?* the fangirls scream. *Edward is a moral, upstanding boy. He would never break the law.*

But he does, ladies. He does.

First and most obvious, Edward drives like a maniac. I'm not talking about the usual going-too-fast. I'm talking about absurd speeds, far over any posted limits. "You're going a hundred miles an hour!" Bella shouts at him as they head home from Bella's ill-fated shopping trip. ". . . Are you trying to kill us?" (*Twilight*)

So what? That's just a traffic offense.

Yes, it is; however, in Washington State, it constitutes reckless driving, a wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property, which carries a punishment of fines—not to mention up to one year of imprisonment. Driving like that is grounds for arrest, and Edward does it repeatedly. “I always drive like this,” he admits to Bella. “. . . I hate driving slow” (*Twilight*). In *Breaking Dawn*, even on their honeymoon, Edward is a freak for fast-moving vehicles, regardless of Bella’s level of comfort or their overall safety. As they zoom toward Isle Esme in a boat made for breaking the sound barrier, Bella notes, “On his face was a familiar exhilarated smile, the one produced by any form of speed.”

Moving up to more sinister and serious offenses, there’s breaking and entering. Edward comes and goes from Bella and Charlie’s house whenever he chooses. And stalking—or whatever you’d like to label Edward’s little habit of sitting in Bella’s room without her knowledge. Sitting beside her bed. Watching her without her awareness or consent. Repeatedly. “I come here almost every night,” he tells her. “You’re interesting when you sleep” (*Twilight*).

Next, to an even bigger crime: the technical point of Edward and Bella’s age difference. Bella Swan is seventeen years old in every sense of the word—well, eighteen at the time of her “death.” Edward’s body stopped aging at seventeen, but in reality, Edward is around one hundred and six years old. *One hundred and six*. Years old. That’s major. And sort of gross. And far outside the range the law allows for a defense of “mistake of age,” or going out with someone who is still a minor. In point of fact and law, Edward Cullen could be arrested for dating Bella at all. It’s amazing that Edward has the nerve to get irked with Jacob for his imprinting on Renesmee (so irked that he almost allows the newborn vampire Bella to rip off Jacob’s head). Jacob isn’t even twenty years older than his intended betrothed. So what gives? What’s good for the vampire isn’t good for the werewolf?

That brings us to the most serious set of offenses of all: the whole issue of “mistakes.” Vampiric mistakes.

As in homicides.

Edward tells Bella that he and his fellow vampires in the Cullen family attempt not to hunt humans or feed on human blood, but he confesses, “We are still dangerous . . . Sometimes we make mistakes.” In *Breaking Dawn*, Jasper is even devastated by the fact that Bella does better at adjusting to being a vampire than he did, and Bella reports, “This was in the context of a discussion about how many people I would kill my first newborn year.”

Let’s take a closer look at this concept and not rush past it, or give it a glossy finish, or treat it the same light, offhand “oops” manner in which Edward presents it.

The Cullens occasionally make “mistakes.”

Meaning, the Cullens occasionally commit murders.

Jasper had a hard time “adjusting.”

Meaning, Jasper Cullen killed a lot of people as a newborn.

Vampires kill people.

*They kill people.*

Edward as much as lets Bella know he has killed humans before, and Bella knows that his extended family is guilty of the same thing. Take Emmett, for example. When Bella discovers Emmett has experienced the attraction Edward feels for Bella before, she asks, “What did Emmett do?” Then she notes, *It was the wrong question to ask*, and finally, “I guess I know” (*Twilight*).

Not only has Edward committed homicide, he’s also guilty of being an accessory-after-the-fact, since Edward knows about Emmett’s homicide and presumably helps him keep that truth hidden. And Jasper’s kills. And how many of Edward’s other family members have murdered people, and how many times has Edward helped them conceal these crimes?

What about conspiracy to commit murder, or premeditation, or whatever you would choose to call it when Edward plans and fantasizes about attacking Bella and killing her? He owns up to his emotions about the first day he met her, reporting, “In that one hour, I

thought of a hundred different ways to lure you from the room with me, to get you alone” (*Twilight*). When Edward finally does claim Bella’s human life, it’s very clear that he had planned for it, prepared for it, and was determined to complete the task.

Let’s review.

Homicide, accessory-after-the-fact to homicide(s), and conspiracy to commit homicide.

Even the most ardent Edward fan must admit—these are serious crimes.

I think it’s safe to say Edward Cullen has a long list of offenses that could get him arrested. “Failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors.” Yeah. His picture might be found right next to that little entry.

Now let’s look at the second of the seven possible criteria for diagnosing Antisocial Personality Disorder: **deceitfulness, as indicated by repeated lying, use of aliases, or conning others for personal profit or pleasure.**

*See?* All the fangirls look triumphant. *Edward’s honest, so you can’t say this nastiness applies to him.*

Oh, yes, I can. In fact, that one’s easy. Edward has used multiple aliases over many years. He’s lied about his age. He and his family have been conning others, town after town, decade after decade: “And how long have you been seventeen?” Bella asks Edward when she’s first learning about his history. His lips twitched as he stared at the road. ‘A while,’ he admitted at last” (*Twilight*).

*But, the fangirls argue, that was for survival, not personal pleasure!*

I argue back that this “family” could have survived without being such prominent citizens. The handsome young doctor instead of the school janitor? The most beautiful, talented, intelligent students in high school instead of young-looking factory workers? A huge home and flashy, fast cars instead of functional vehicles to serve the purpose of their facades? Without all these trappings of luxury and pleasure, the Cullens and Edward could fly much lower on society’s

radar and get by with only a few deceptions, aliases, and con jobs. As it stands, because they choose to live in luxurious fashion, the Cullens must lie by action, word, or omission on an almost daily basis. That much is their choice—and it is for personal profit and pleasure.

When Edward first saves Bella's life in *Twilight*, he lies about aspects of that as well. "How did you get over here so fast?" Bella inquires. "I was standing right next to you, Bella," Edward responds, even though he was clearly beside his own vehicle as the accident began to occur. He then tries to deflect Bella's suspicion and curiosity at the hospital by first lying about the fact that he promised to give her an explanation, then treating her with derision when she relates her version of the accident. "You think I lifted a van off you?" His tone questioned my sanity."

It would seem that Edward, along with his entire vampiric clan, practices deceit as easily as taking a breath. Edward can and does con in the blink of an eye, almost every day of his unnatural life. Edward is honest—when it suits him, and suits his purposes, and gets him what he wants, *only*. The rest of the time, sorry, ladies, but Edward Cullen is a professional liar.

On to the third criteria for Antisocial Personality Disorder: **impulsivity or failure to plan ahead.**

*Now I know we've got you*, roars the fangirl contingent. *Edward is careful. He plans everything.*

Ah, but is that true?

The day Edward meets Bella, he goes straight to Carlisle at the hospital, trades cars with his foster father, and in his own words, "By the next morning I was in Alaska." He spends a few days there, then decides that little road-trip was hasty, "So I came back" (*Twilight*).

Shortly after that, again on impulse, he saves Bella's life even though it would have been better for his entire family if he had let her die. He thinks of a plausible reason for this action, but lets on to Bella, "I only thought of that excuse later. At the time, all I could think was, 'Not her'" (*Twilight*). Edward then impulsively eavesdrops

on the minds of her friends and family whenever it strikes him, intruding on the privacy of others to discover Bella's thoughts, feelings, and actions—instead of just asking her, or doing his best to find out by more ethical means.

Then later, in one of the most pivotal moments of *Twilight's* story, Edward again acts impulsively by allowing Bella to attend the family baseball game. When it all turns wrong, Edward realizes that murderous vampires are bearing down on the clearing where they're playing. "I'm sorry, Bella," he says as he once more admits his impulsive decisions have placed her in harm's way. "It was stupid, irresponsible, to expose you like this." Of course, the damage is done, and later in the tale, Bella almost pays with her life.

More examples stack up in *Breaking Dawn*, when Edward fails to explore whether or not humans and vampires can conceive, thus risking Bella's human and eternal life with a ferocious, painful pregnancy. Later, he fails to check newborn Bella's hunting grounds carefully enough, and puts her at risk for killing humans on her first hunt. He then does not think through his anger with Jacob over Renesmee, and in allowing Bella to attack Jacob, he gets Seth, his friend and ally, wounded. Impulsivity is definitely an issue for Edward, and his mistakes cause much danger and pain.

Failure to conform to social norms, deceitfulness, and impulsivity—these three factors would be enough to diagnose Edward, and for most mental health professionals to beg Bella to be sensible about hanging around with this bad, dangerous boy. Some doctors might even encourage her parents to keep her at home under lock and key if necessary, because relationships like this lead only to bad places—like young women in the hospital, beaten, bitten, bones broken—oh, but that can't happen to Bella, right? But . . . it does. In more ways than one, and more than once!

*Wait, wait, every fangirl across the globe gasps. That's just the minimum. Edward doesn't meet any more of the diagnostic criteria. We know he doesn't.*

Hmm. Let's see. There's **irritability and aggressiveness** (hello? Edward's psycho behavior when he first meets Bella—and the whole eating mountain lions thing). There's **reckless disregard for safety of self or others** (did I mention Edward hunts mountain lions instead of rabbits or beavers or foxes? Cheers on his brother Emmett as he hunt bears? Has Bella stay with him so he won't go murder the men who stalked her in the alley? Oh, and that driving thing again, and encouraging the attack on Jacob that gets Seth clobbered . . . yep, this list is endless). And sixth on the list is **consistent irresponsibility** (Edward misses a lot of days at school, doesn't he?).

Suffice it to say, we're now at six out of seven criteria met.

Sociopath could be spelled E-D-W-A-R-D C-U-L-L-E-N.

But, wait. What's this last item on the evil list of seven factors adding up to Antisocial Personality Disorder?

**Lack of remorse, as indicated by being indifferent to or rationalizing having hurt, mistreated, or stolen from another.**

Hey, even I have to admit that Edward Cullen is nothing if not a dark, brooding ball of remorse. Over his existence. Over his bloodlust. Over his feelings for Bella. Over bruising her with his passion. Over causing her pregnancy. Over *everything*. So, all of you fangirls who have armed yourselves and started hunting my address on the internet, you can calm down, because this is where the whole Edward-as-Sociopath argument begins to unravel.

Edward brings new meaning and intensity to the word *remorse*.

This poor century-old boy feels guilty for just about everything related to his life, family, and existence. "I don't want to be a monster," he says emphatically when Bella questions him in *Twilight*. From the moment he meets Bella, he proves this assertion in every conceivable way. His impulsive flight out of Forks, for example, he undertakes because at his core, Edward doesn't wish to harm Bella. His return, at least in part, occurs because he can't bear the knowledge that his running away emotionally wounded his foster mother Esme. When all of this spills out of him, he tells Bella, "I couldn't live with

myself if I ever hurt you. You don't know how it's tortured me" (*Twilight*). In *Breaking Dawn*, he is wickedly and endlessly tortured, first by the effects of his own strength during their honeymoon, and then more intensely as Bella sickens and begins to die from her pregnancy.

For all of his many years (which could be considered squicky by some standards with respect to this relationship), Edward has zero emotional experience. As such, he truly is seventeen at heart, and in actions. He abashedly admits to Bella that he's never been attracted to another human being before. When he falls in love with her—and he does appear to love her—he falls so hard he can barely think clearly. “You are the most important thing to me now,” he explains to her. “The most important thing to me ever” (*Twilight*). The depth and intensity of these emotions set Edward apart from most sociopaths, who only experience the most superficial of emotions.

Edward also makes repeated attempts to deny himself the very thing he wants most: Bella. At first, he tries physical distance and contrives reasons to stay away from her—yet he can't. When those strategies fail, he sets about warning her, attempting to put her off or scare her away with statements like, “That is something to be afraid of, indeed. Wanting to be with me. That's really not in your best interest.” Even when Bella won't believe him or listen to him, he tries yet again, telling her, “Never forget that I am more dangerous to you than I am to anyone else” (*Twilight*). On their honeymoon, he denies even his own physical desires, declaring, “I will never hurt you again” (*Breaking Dawn*). These attempts to see to the welfare of another instead of his own also separate Edward from the typical sociopath. He is delaying and even denying his own gratification—something the garden variety antisocial would never do. It's *not* all about him. Edward's conscience is on full display in these telling moments.

In *Twilight*, when Edward's choice to be with Bella does in fact hurl her into a dangerous situation during the baseball game when other vampires arrive, Edward puts his own body between Bella and

the bloodthirsty tracker intending to harm her. He's willing to sacrifice his own safety, comfort, and life to protect her—not something a sociopath would ever consider. In *Breaking Dawn*, during the confrontation with the Volturi, it's clear that Edward will give up his own life to take out the Volturi's tracker Demetri and be certain that his daughter and surviving friends will be safe in the battle's aftermath.

Edward tells Bella more than once, in so many ways, that without her, his life would end. At every turn, he refuses to abandon the girl he loves, or to allow his family or hers to come to bad ends. He sticks right beside Bella, sometimes so close that he keeps his arm around her, until all dangers are defeated.

Edward also takes full personal responsibility for the disasters he causes or shares responsibility for creating, demonstrating his guilt, angst, and deep, deep feelings. He does everything within his power to right wrongs associated with his actions, including risking an attack by attempting to stop stronger, maddened newborn Bella from attacking humans on her first hunt. Personal responsibility and making amends for poor decisions by assuming the consequences—once more, not the actions of a sociopath. Most antisocials will go to any length to blame their actions on others, and never make the effort to repair damage they have done, especially damage that truly isn't, in many senses, their fault.

In *Twilight*, when Bella later almost dies at the hands (er, fangs) of the horrific hunter bent on taking her life, she experiences Edward's rush of feelings as a dream. "Bella, Bella, no, oh please, no, no!" And the angel was sobbing tearless, broken sobs." A sociopath in tears over the pain of another human being? Not likely. In fact, that would just about be a miracle. Sociopaths are cold, emotionless people, not at all touched by this depth of feeling. Edward shows the same burst of feeling when he labors so hard to save Bella's life after Renesmee's birth. It's clear he's breaking with her, dying with her, until he at last sweeps her away from the cliff-edge of human death.

Even more telling about Edward's lack of a sociopathic spirit—he has so many perfect opportunities, perfect excuses, to “turn” Bella. To make her a vampire like himself and have her young and beautiful forever. In *Twilight*, after the hunter's attack, Edward even has to bite her, taste her blood, to save her from the hunter's infection. Everyone would certainly understand if he can't control himself, if he gives into temptation and drinks her to the brink of death—or if he simply refuses to take the risk and lets her go through the pain of the change into a vampire. Either way, he would have what he most desires—Bella, by his side, forever—but Edward makes a noble decision. He takes away the fire and danger in Bella's blood, eases her pain, and removes the infection instead of allowing the transition to claim her. In *Breaking Dawn*, he allows Bella her human honeymoon, even though this choice denies him pleasure, and he would have allowed her to stay human even longer, had the pregnancy not occurred.

When Bella chastises Edward for not allowing her to become a vampire, he reminds her of the humans she would lose, like her mother and father. He tells her he won't be the one to end her life. When she tries to insist, he becomes adamant that she should live as she was meant to live, and once more reveals his inner turmoil about the very fact he is even alive and in the world himself. “That's how it's supposed to happen. How it should happen. How it would have happened if I didn't exist—and *I shouldn't exist*” (*Twilight*).

Edward often puts Bella's needs before his own, such as when he stays at her bedside at the end of *Twilight* while she recovers from the hunter's attack, day in and day out. “As long as it makes you happy, I'll be here.” He even goes to excessive lengths to make sure Bella has all the experiences due her, that she doesn't sacrifice one bit of the excitement and discovery she should have as a seventeen-year-old girl. He takes her (somewhat against her will, even) to her prom. Not exactly the actions of a calculating, selfish sociopath.

Finally, when Bella once more tries to drive Edward to turn her into a vampire before the time is right, he puts her off with gentleness

and love. Instead of granting her impetuous wish, he declares his devotion once more with, “I will stay with you—isn’t that enough?” Then he tells her that her love is enough for him, “Enough for forever” (*Twilight*). Hence, in almost every way, Edward puts Bella’s needs ahead of his own, even when she herself doesn’t recognize her best interests and tempts him to do otherwise.

So, how about it, fangirls? Have I saved my own life yet?

I think it’s clear that on the surface, Edward represents every parent’s nightmare. He’s a bad boy, a very dangerous boy, and by the letter of the diagnostic law, he could be categorized as among the worst of the worst: an antisocial, a soulless sociopath, devoid of proper conscience and concern for the welfare of others. Yet, when we dig below that surface, get past appearances, and really look into the heart and mind of Edward, we find a torn, tortured, and remorseful creature who wants to love, who does love, and who would give his eternal life to protect the people (and vampires) who matter to him.

“Common sense told me I should be terrified,” Bella notes as she reconciles these different facets of the boy who has captured her heart. “Instead, I was relieved to finally understand. And I was filled with compassion for his suffering, even now, as he confessed his craving to take my life” (*Twilight*).

This is the crux of Edward, and perhaps the key aspect of him that moves Bella so deeply and so thoroughly. He is in many ways a monster, and he definitely has violent and unspeakable urges. He makes mistakes, and he takes reckless chances, some of which jeopardize the very people he so wishes to cherish and protect. But for all of these transgressions, Edward truly suffers, and this more than anything redeems him.

Edward’s passion, angst, and guilt, and even more importantly, his actions, lift him out of the category of *very dangerous boy* and place him firmly in a different category. You know what it is, fangirls, just like Bella, and you’ve known it all along. I’ll admit it, too. When all things are considered and explored, this angelic vampire may be

dark and treacherous, mysterious and mercurial, even arrogant and impulsive—but more than anything else, Edward Cullen is a hero.



Susan Vaught is the author of *Trigger*, which was called “A powerful cautionary tale” by *Publisher’s Weekly* in a starred review, and *Stormwitch*, winner of the Carl Brandon Society Kindred Award. Both were named Best Books for Young Adults by the American Library Association. *Big Fat Manifesto* has been named a Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People 2009, and made the Amelia Bloomer list. Her most recent release, *Exposed*, has the interest of internet-savvy teens all over the country. Next up: a two-volume epic fantasy co-authored with her son JB Redmond. *Oathbreaker* tells the tale of a boy taken from his family against his will and forced to become an assassin’s apprentice. Susan is a practicing neuropsychologist and lives with her family and dozens of pets in rural Kentucky.

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