



Fanpire: The Twilight Saga and the Women Who Love it

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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.

Fanpire: The Twilight Saga and the Women Who Love it Details

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From Reader Review Fanpire: The Twilight Saga and the Women Who Love it for online ebook

Andd Becker says

Twilight fans, known as the fanpire, form the subject of the book.

The author conducted research through interviews, online sites visits, and a survey. She talked with fans of all ages at conventions, workshops, and film showings. She spoke with residents of Forks.

The resultant book is a sociological study of a cultural phenomenon. The author reveals why females find Bella and Edward appealing.

I received this book free through the goodreads FIRST READS program.

Trisha McKee says

I am not a Twilight fan. I have read the books because i do not like to disparage anything unless i, myself, have thoroughly experienced/examined it. So i read the books and watched the movies with my googly-eyed preteen daughter.

I understood the obsession young girls had, but i was astonished at the pure intensity with which seemingly normal, professional adult women aimed at this story. They were worse than the children with their lust and dedication.

So i was anxious to read book to figure it all out.

And some of it was enlightening. Erzen focused on all sides, which might have taken away from a more intense scrutiny. At times, i felt she glossed over points that I wished she would have delved deeper into. But on the other hand, I appreciate all that was included and that could not have happened if more focus was placed on particular areas.

Some of the book was simply common sense. Erzen discusses how women love Edward because he pays attention to Bella, whose father was emotionally absent (although I disagree with the father part- i would not describe her father as emotionally absent. Perhaps less affectionate but his love was always clear throughout the books). Women expressed a desire for that type of behavior from their significant other.

This is the same old battlecry heard from women over and over through the years. More affection, more love, more attention. And so they seek out the fictional character that seems to represent just what they are searching for. But real-life people have many sides to them, not just one dimensional caricature portrayed on paper or in special-effect filled movies.

Erzen hits on the topics with explanations and descriptions of her own encounters with the fans. I enjoyed this book, found it easy to read through, able to understand the points she was making, and appreciated the topics she touched upon.

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

I first bought Twilight for my then thirteen year old daughter, after reading a news article about it's phenomenal popularity in the US, in the hopes that it would spur her to read something other than her Facebook status feed. She glanced at the blurb then tossed it back at me, complaining it was too thick and she wasn't interested. Deflated, I figured I would read it and see what all the fuss was about. Three hours

later I looked up and cursed, it was Sunday 7pm, the shops were already shut and I would have to wait until the next day to go and buy New Moon. On Monday morning I dropped my children off at school, bought the rest of the series and spent the next two days immersed in Forks.

In my late thirties, a married mother of four children with a university degree, I was hardly Meyer's target audience but I read the books breathlessly, one after another, resenting interruptions and finished the last page of Breaking Dawn with a sigh of regret. Intellectually I recognised the flaws in the series but I just couldn't bring myself to care. I have no idea why I fell in love with the saga, but I was wholly enamoured.

Fanpire is the result of ethnographic research amongst the diverse fans of the series by Professor Tanya Erzen, who was interested in exploring the books appeal. An analysis of online surveys promoted at Twilight fan sites and first person interviews with Twihards of all ages, yields surprising contradictions and fascinating theories. Erzen also explores the accusations leveled at series fans by Twilight haters and its critics.

For the most part, Fanpire is a very readable cultural study, with discussion from Twilight identities such as the site hosts of bellaandedward.com, twilightmoms.com and twilightguy.com and quotes from the fans themselves. It is a little repetitive at times and occasionally drifts off into tangents (such as Meyers' and Summits lack of support for the town of Forks).

Interestingly, though Fanpire was written before the 'discovery' and publication of Fifty Shades of Grey, Erzen devotes an entire chapter to Twilight fanfiction and specifically to the source of Fifty Shades, known then as The Master of the Universe, and shares an interesting comment that reveals the genesis of the erotica series name.

Fanpire is an interesting read, and I think the author's hypothesis's have some validity though I am not sure it adequately explains my own infatuation with the series. Some phenomena simply can't be explained or defined by either a qualitative or quantitative study and the popularity of Twilight is one of them.

Anne (Angel Anne Reviews) Nelson says

I received my copy of "Fanpire: The Twilight Saga and the Women Who Love it" by author Tanya Erzen as a Goodreads win. And as a reader I feel it only fair to give my fair and unbiased opinion in a review. Thank you so much for the opportunity to read your novel.

I felt that it was an interesting read, which points out good as well as the bad things about the series. Erzen definitely did try to avoid conflict within the series, and although it's not a bad thing, except Erzen focused on the saga as a whole, the book felt like it lacked more in-depth chapters.

Erzen did extensive work on this book by attending many Twilight events where she was able to talk to people, and then shared her findings/conclusions in Fanpire. (although not about whether The Twilight Series is good or bad). We all know for sure that Twilight is popular with a wide range of followers that span from mothers and daughters, men, women and the list can go on and on.

For the most part, Fanpire is a very readable study, with discussion from Twilight web pages that are for those who love the Twilight Series and all that it involves. (I being one of them) It is a little repetitive at times, but if you bear with it you will enjoy it.

Fanpire is an interesting read, and I think the author's do have some insight though I am not sure it truly

explains my own love and addiction with the series. I feel that addictions to some series of books simply can't be explained, such as the case with the popularity of Twilight is one of them.

I did enjoy this read with no regrets reading Fanpire, and it was interesting to see some more older/mature women (and men) talking about Twilight, along with young girls yelling their love for Rob/Edward. It's not every day that you get to see wives talking about the books as well as teenagers pointing out that while they love the books.

I would say that for those who love The Twilight Series, that you may enjoy the interesting points that have been written in Fanpire... give it a shot and see how you feel about it.

Recommend: YA and up

Rating: 3.5/5 angel stars

Angel Anne Reviews

Lori Kircher says

5/5 stars. A great nonfiction read on the Twilight Saga fan base. Being a huge Twilight fan I had to pick this up. Some of the topics discussed I disagreed with (Certain religion aspects and feminine issues). I loved how the conventions were described (I really want to go to one now). Overall, a great informative book about not only the fans but the themes within the Saga. This novel is very short, only 134 pages. It's a favorite of mine, I would recommend it, and reread it again in the future.

Amy says

I read the Twilight saga for the same reason Ms. Erzen dove into the world of the Twilight fandom (or "fanpire"): curiosity. What makes these books so popular among both teenagers and adult women? And, after I read them, I couldn't help but wonder: why, when I find so many elements of these books disturbing, am I still enjoying the story? Ms. Erzen answered all of these questions to my satisfaction in her well-researched book. Each chapter focuses on one aspect of the Twilight saga's appeal among fans and focuses primarily on one book in the saga. I found the book well-written, informative, and thought-provoking.

Chrissy says

I must be one of the last women in the world to have not yet read the infamous Twilight series. I've seen the first movie (which I loved) and parts of the second and third (which didn't impress me as much) and I am, of course, familiar with the story as well as how everything wraps up in the end of the final installment, Breaking Dawn. And sure, I do plan to read these novels at some point, because I always like to be familiar with whatever is outrageously popular in literature, although I do realize that I'm quite behind on this endeavor. But, I finally have my own copies of all four books and I plan to get them read pretty soon -- which made me interested in this little gem -- FANPIRE: THE TWILIGHT SAGA AND THE WOMEN WHO LOVE IT.

Basically, Erzen positions herself as an anthropologist of popular culture, creating an ethnography of sorts of the women who adore this popular brand of vampire fiction, making herself a part of their gatherings in order to understand the popularity behind the series. Ranging from a Bella martial arts class to a Twilight exercise class or a massive Twilight convention, Erzen encounters various groups of women -- both online and in person, who share a notable obsession with everything Twilight. She encounters bands who create all of their songs around themes from the Twilight books, mothers who convene yearly to gush in a group setting about their love for Bella and Edward, and even groups who indulge in a spirituality that centers on the beliefs and lifestyles of the Cullen clan.

Erzen takes several different perspectives, explaining the fascination with Twilight on a number of unique views. Some see the series as an expression of their own conservative religious beliefs, emphasizing the chastity of Bella and Edward until marriage. Others take Twilight as an embodiment of post-feminism, asserting a woman's right to boldly choose love over career and education without feeling shamed for her choice. Some view Twilight as a depiction of the perfect romance, with a brooding, adoring man deliberately seeking out an average, clumsy female, with whom many typical women can easily relate. Erzen explains the relation of Twilight to both political and religious beliefs, the expression of cultural views on romance as applied to Twilight, as well as the manner in which the movies and books have spawned an economic greed that encourages fans to show their loyalty with their dollars and cents.

Engaging, entertaining, and at points enlightening, *FANPIRE* is a great read not only for those who adore Twilight but for those who find themselves interested in the ways that literature impacts society as well as the ways in which desires, beliefs, and insecurities similarly impact literature. I would very much enjoy seeing similar books focusing on other series or genres and I'm glad I had the opportunity to read and review *FANPIRE*.

(I did receive an electronic copy of this book for the express purpose of providing an honest review. All thoughts are my own and are uninfluenced by the manner in which the book was received.)

says

I liked the Twilight books and movies but I am not a "Twilight Fanatic." I did not care for this book at all.

Won on Goodreads

Stephanie says

**Original Post at Fangs, Wands and Fairy Dust under the title
FANPIRE is a Fascinating Examination of Fandom**

FANPIRE:

The Twilight Saga and the Women Who Love It

Tanya Erzen

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Also in Ebook formats

Obtained copy at BEA. No remuneration exchanged and all opinions expressed herein are my own, unless otherwise noted or cited.

With the final movie in the *TWILIGHT* Saga set to open in November, it's apt to examine the *Twilight* phenomenon and the fans who run the spectrum from read the books and see the movie, to those who treat *TWILIGHT* as a religion (some do!).

Don't get me wrong, I love *TWILIGHT*, but over the years my analytical side has been poking at my fangirl side. But her analysis is very articulate and many of her hypotheses are similar to statements I have made.

The first of these is that there is much about *Twilight* that reverberates with what little I know about the church of Latter Day Saints. *TWILIGHT*'s creator, Stephanie Meyer is a devout member of the LDS, and has, according to Ms. Erzen, related that the Book of Mormon is the most important text in her life.

As I have said, my knowledge of the LDS is minimal and largely derived from watching HBO's "Big Love." But, as we watched an episode about one of the characters in the story's mother being sealed with her second husband and thereby being with him for all eternity I turned to my husband and said, "That's an important part of *Twilight*'s story." After all Bella gets to stay with her family forever as an immortal vampire.

Another insight similar to my own is that of a parent using the books to discuss choices.

I asked Professor Erzen Did she set out to her first *Twilight* event as an academic preparing to write a book or dissertation?

She kindly responded:

No, I came to my first *Twilight* event in Forks, WA, which was the Summer School in Forks, a one-time event because of my interest in the phenomenon and in seeing Forks since it had become a *Twilight* tourist mecca. All my books are based on ethnography- interviewing people and participant observation so I was always more interested in the people who loved the books rather than the books themselves. Once I spent the weekend in Forks and talked to people, I became interested in doing an article or book because everyone was analyzing the story, and I found the fans much more interesting.

While reading the book yesterday (9/5) I also found that Erzen's insights, an rhetorically analyzed theories offered me new insights into the characters in the book and why the books are so appealing to women from their teens through middle-age (and beyond).

Young women have a lot to decide, and a huge onus placed on them for fulfilling contradictory signals about everything from education to with whom she should sleep and when. Bella turns her choices--many of them, over to Edward and his family.

For women past their teens, it may be that life as Bella is somewhat more appealing than what many feel is the constant drudgery of adult life and parenthood. After all, since Bella and Edward's daughter Renesme grows up overnight there are no 3 AM feedings, not that that matters as vampires don't sleep in Meyer's world. And, living in a communal, and devoted family, she and Edward will never lack for baby sitters. Plus,

add in the permanent and irrevocable "imprinting" of Renesme onto Bella's werewolf would-have-been lover. And, the family is filthy rich besides!

Wow, who wouldn't want to be Bella?

Erzen examines everything from a "Summer School" in Forks program, to TWILIGHT conventions to the web presence of and development of friendships among "Twihards." She looks at many aspects of fandom that I never thought of. She shows how lives have been changed, for better and some not so much. And, she discusses the subject of fan fiction, a phenomenon which launched the blockbuster FIFTY SHADES as Master of the Universe. Erzen's work lead me to the conclusion that Bella was a sub even before E.L. James got all kinky with it.

I asked Professor Erzen if she write the parts about Master of the Universe, which has obviously become Fifty Shades, prior to or without knowing about FIFTY SHADES? Has that section been rewritten to reflect the new status of the fanfic to blockbuster book?

Again, I appreciate that she took the time to respond:

I wrote about Master of the Universe before it ever became Fifty Shades of Grey. It was the most popular smut story on Twilighted.net, and I read it while it was still up there before the author pulled it. I focused on the story because I was writing about smut fan fic, had been to fan fiction workshops, and it was the most read and commented upon story. Unlike most people who don't understand why Fifty Shades is so popular, it makes perfect sense to me because it already had a huge readership as fan fiction, and the romantic storyline and characters are still practically identical to Twilight.

In the final chapter Erzen deals with the inevitable let down fans, Forks and TWILIGHT conventions will feel after the November release of Breaking Dawn 2. Where the inception of the saga changed lives its inevitable fade as the "next big thing" takes over will change lives as well.

To accomplish her somewhat academic work, Erzen attended events and premieres; she read the books, and while she didn't drink the kool-aid, she sniffed the pitcher to check out the contents. She follows several fans over time and conducted an online survey. I think the work is a valuable look into popular culture and the effect of fandom, the internet and mass media have on individuals and culture. I think it's a little repetitive and wonder if it merits an entire book. But, it's insightful and entertaining. I can easily recommend it to readers who marvel (or scoff) at, or who are part of, the phenomenon of TWILIGHT.

Patricia says

I usually refrain from requesting (and reviewing) Non-Fiction titles, but there are certain types of books that I can't resist, like.. books about books and fandoms.

Mostly everyone knows that I'm not a big fan of Twilight. At the same time, I'm very much fascinated by how incredibly strong Twilight's influence on us is: People started reading because of the saga, spent dozens

of dollars on franchise, and can quote half of the dialogue by heart.

As someone who's just interested enough to care, but not enough to actually attend any TwiCons or movie premieres or whatnot, getting to read about them from a perspective that I can actually appreciate, was the main reason why I ended up reading *Fanpire*.

It was an interesting read, and pointed out the good and bad things about the series, without being overly enthusiastic or ranty. Erzen certainly tried to avoid conflict there, and that's not a bad thing, except that, because she focussed on the saga as a whole, the book lacked more in-depth chapters.

Erzen attended many *Twilight*-related events, talked to people, shared her conclusions- though those aren't about whether *Twilight* is great or horrible. It's a widely-known fact: *Twilight* is popular and the people who enjoy the series are as different from each other as can be: They are mothers and daughters, men, women, Mormons, atheists, etc.

She talks about the rather dysfunctional relationship of Bella and Edward's, and makes it a point to also show how the majority of the fandom realizes (or has come to realize) that while enjoying their relationship in a book, they'd never want to actually live that.

The book basically consists of her summarizing the novels and talking about the events she attended and fans she talked to. She also spends some time talking about fan-fiction (including the Masters of the Universe FF, also known as the *Fifty Shades of Grey* series), male fans, how the series might affect relationships and why it is so popular despite its flaws. - I enjoyed those parts, even though I wish she had talked about several parts a little more and cut others. (Then again, I got a copy MONTHS in advance, so it's definitely possible that the final copy has been edited a little more.)

In short

I do not regret reading *Fanpire*, and I think it was interesting to see some more mature women (and men, no matter how few of them) talking about *Twilight*. We all get to see and hear 15-year-old girls shrieking "Rob!!! Edward! OME!", but it's rare to get to see wives talking about the books or teenagers pointing out that while they love the books, they wouldn't want to be in a relationship with a stalker. ;)

Lisa says

I don't generally read and review nonfiction, but as a fan of the *Twilight* series, I was intrigued and interested in the concept behind this particular work. While I enjoyed the in-depth look at the fandom and the different aspects of it, I felt that the thoughts were a little disjointed. It felt like the author hopped from one subject to another and the transitions could have been a bit smoother. I felt like the timeline was all over the place.

I received an advanced reader copy of this book so I will not comment on the editing of this one.

I felt that the facts were displayed well. it might have been better if the footnotes were accessible by clicking on them in the eBook, but perhaps that was corrected in the final edition.

Tiffany says

I love, love, love the Twilight Series, so I was tickled to death when I won this book from Goodreads First Reads. I rented the first movie for my son, and ended up watching it by myself when he fell asleep half way through. Since then, I've purchased all the books and movies. I can honestly see where the author came up with the idea for the "Fanpire" book with all us girls/women going crazy for the sexy characters and epic love story. The first chapter, titled, "I'm in love with a fictional character" says it all, doesn't it! Anyway, this book gives some insight into the crazy fan world of the Twilight series, which I will happily say I'm a part of.

Steve Wiggins says

Popular culture and religion go hand-in-glove, even in the most unexpected places. This is a fascinating study of how vampires have invaded the realm of religion. See more at: Sects and Violence in the Ancient World.

Kayla Eklund says

This review is hard for me to write. I am very indifferent about Fanpire. I felt no strong emotions either good or bad while reading it. I think that might be because I am not a gigantic fan of The Twilight Saga. When it first came out, I really liked it. Then right before the movie was released Twilight was everywhere. Eventually, I got so sick and tired of hearing about Twilight that I grew to majorly dislike it. Anyways, some parts of the book were interesting. It was kind of fun learning about all of the weird and crazy Twilight products out there. You can buy anything from Twilight Barbie dolls to Edward dildos. It was neat learning about all of the different conventions. I would have never guessed that the U.S. holds that many Twilight conventions across the country. Some of the fans are crazy, but I guess you get that with every fan base. It was also cool to hear about 50 Shades of Grey when it was still the Twilight fan fic, Master of the Universe.
