

Stephenie Meyer's Interview

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by Cristina Ginesi

On an extraordinarily sunny day, Stephenie Meyer arrives in the Etruscan town, the US writer who has sent head over heels the teenagers on the other side of the ocean...and not only them. Her novels, an explosive mixture of romantic gothic atmosphere, breathtaking adventure and an ardent romanticism, veiled by tacit eroticism, fascinate and conquest the readers, arousing a real collective delirium that is also spreading throughout our country, as well. After the multi-prized "Twilight", her debut novel (best book for youth in the last five years, according to Amazon.com, Top Ten of New York Times, and best 2005 book in the opinion of Publishers Weekly) that has been translated into Italian and published by Fazi Editore, "New Moon" has just been launched in Italy.

The second volume (of which was supposed to be a trilogy but is already at the fourth volume, "Eclipse", coming out in August in US), still recounts the vicissitudes of Edward the vampire and the sweet Bella, and examines in depth the doubts and the interior anxiety of the girl involved in a "mad" love not of this world.

In order to meet her fans on her only Italian fixture, Stephenie Meyer chose Volterra, the magic and mysterious Tuscan town where a part of her novel is also set.

Perhaps not everybody knows about the tormented vicissitudes of the Cullen family in Forks (rainy town in Washington DC), a lineage of vampires as non-conventional as terribly full of charm. But if you try to ask a teenager who Edward is, I assure you that their eyes dilate to a dreamlike dimension, a mirror reflecting the hopes, wishes, expectations, and fears of such a dignified and light-hearted period (but we discover this only later!), at the same time totally absorbing and cynical, as is adolescence. In this sectarian world of puberty, where the tyrannical "all or nothing" reigns supreme, where "or you love or you hate", "or you live or you die", feelings and emotions burn within, go deep inside the skin, beat in unison with the heart, enflame the viscera. They become the heartbeat of life, blood flowing through the veins, and air pumping into the lungs.

The protagonists of Stephenie Meyer's books are so good-looking and unapproachable in their super-human condition, they can be either as good as gold or as bad as hell, that they have achieved a place of honour in the souls and dreams of the contemporary teen generation.

It was a dream that decreed the fortune of the Cullen family, but also of Stephenie, who up until that moment neither about bats nor lycanthropes did she wish to speak.

«One night, Edward appeared to me in all his dazzling beauty. I cannot do other than comply with his will...and I started writing». This is the beginning of our interview with the book's author – a good-looking woman of 34 years old, married and with three children – in the backstage of the Persio Flacco Theatre in Volterra. *«Up until then I was not especially keen on horror and fantasy, vampires and so on...rather... - she tell us surprised, and still shocked (she used these very same words) by this unexpected and overwhelming success - but they looked for me and found me!»*

From then on Stephenie's life has changed, welcoming the protagonists of the extraordinarily romantic love story between a "lost" soul and a "pure" soul: Edward and Bella. There is an air of Romeo and Juliet in this second volume, New Moon, but after all William Shakespeare, together with Daphne Du Maurier and Louisa May Alcott, are amongst her favourite authors.

From the theatre hall applause and cheers resound, while Stephenie continues talking between wide smiles and sips of water from her inseparable bottle of water. She reveals a secret, how fundamental listening to music was during her writing. *«While writing, I always listen to music. And the notes from the songs by Linkin' Park, Muse and My Chemical Romance, were a relevant source of inspiration in order to be able to identify myself with characters and feelings».* But this frank and seraphic woman wearing a flowery dress and with long and soft hair, seems truly to have a certain link with the paranormal. With a wriggle of uneasiness, I listen to her bewildering "confession".

«I had just finished one of the New Moon's chapters taking place in Italy. The story was set in a Tuscan town, because it is an ancient region, rich in centuries old traditions and civilizations. There, a family of vampires live, the Volturi. I was thinking of an imaginative place in order to avoid eventual trouble amongst the local population – reveals the author - then I looked at the regional map and I read the name Volterra! I went immediately to the town's website and I was wordless. The square with the clock tower (Piazza dei Priori ndr) about which I have written, was there in front of me on my screen! It still gives me the shivers, if I think about it! – she smiles - Then I decided to entitle that chapter "Volterra", and I decided to present my book here, in this very same town. To say the truth – she says mysteriously - I was curious to see where the Volturi live! And now I am here, in this marvellous town!»

Now, should the Volturi truly live in Volterra is very difficult to say, but surely hundreds of fans coming from all over Italy – not only bringing with them coloured posters, but also holding often red and juicy apples in their hands or depicting those same apples on their faces - call for their heroin. Then Stephenie leaves.

She says goodbye to me, she kisses me and left me with a photo, on which she, the mother of the vampires, the queen of darkness, is really radiant. But, after all, she is good-natured and not a touchy character, unconventional for a person who writes about the “non-dead”, and this is also revealed in her novels where despite being true to the vampire’s distinguishing features, her vampires don’t burn in the sunshine rather they shine, they are “vegetarian” because they drink only the blood of animals instead of human blood, they have strong and sharp teeth but without the unaesthetic pointed canine teeth, and above all they are as beautiful as gods.

Meanwhile, Stephenie has gone on the stage to enchant the public with her simplicity.

Two final considerations. The first is the satisfaction to realise that fame and fortune do not necessarily mean conceit and bad manners.

The second is: in a “virtual era” where also the deepest feelings are represented by “pixel”, it is very pleasing to discover that the written word can still take us to a dream world.

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