

## Jeff Kirkendall's Thoughts For The Month Column

Thoughts, Opinions, Reviews, Commentary & More!

Hello and Welcome! My name is Jeff Kirkendall and I'm an independent filmmaker and actor from the Upstate New York area. This is the section of the Very Scary Productions website where I write about topics related to independent filmmaking, digital video production, acting, movies in general, horror movies in particular, my own indie movies, as well as anything and everything related or in between.

I decided to create this commentary page because I find that I often come across things that either interest me, excite me, intrigue me, or maybe just bug me. Any topic related to movies and cinema is fair game, from the most mainstream to the most controversial. For example I'll often read about movie projects that I have a strong interest in or opinion on, for one reason or another. This page gives me a forum to discuss these things. It's all about discussion and furthering understanding of our pop culture. Anyone who has feedback concerning what I have to say here, feel free to contact me (see the contact link at <http://www.veryscaryproductions.com/>).

I'd also like to point out that the following is just my opinion, and everyone is free to agree or disagree with what I have to say. Enjoy, and to all the Indies out there: Keep on Filming!

SUBJECT: Movie Review – *Twilight* - Best of 2008 List Choice – January 2009

For my first Thoughts For The Month column of the New Year I'd like to discuss just one of the very cool movies I saw in 2008. I know, I know, this is an abrupt change. In previous years I've put the whole list in one column, however this year the plan is to intersperse them into separate columns throughout the year. There were just too many darn interesting movies in 08! Enjoy!

*Twilight* was another one of those films I wasn't eagerly anticipating or even planning on seeing. A friend suggested the movie, and since there wasn't much else of interest out at the time I agreed and we headed to our local multiplex on opening weekend. I will admit to having heard about the whole *Twilight* phenomenon beforehand however. As most female fans less than twenty years old already know, the movie is based on an incredibly popular novel of the same name by Stephenie Meyer, about a young woman named Bella who falls for a young guy named Edward who happens to be a vampire. And apparently actor Robert Pattinson, who plays Edward in the film, had gone on a promotional mall tour (at Hot Topics stores across the USA) and had quickly become a teen heartthrob even before the movie was released. So not surprisingly when we went to the theater on opening weekend we were surrounded by a packed house full of glassy-eyed teen girls and some parents along for the ride. Before the movie started I shook my head, questioned my sanity, and asked myself again why exactly I had agreed to go see this (even if there was nothing else good playing). I tried to tell myself that it's a vampire movie darn it! And I'm a vampire movie fan! However somehow I wasn't buying that justification. Thinking I was probably in for a long and forgettable evening I settled back into my chair as the chatter finally stopped and the house lights dimmed. Thankfully this time however, my worries over seeing another clunker were unfounded. *Twilight* proved to be a pleasant little fanged surprise.

In ***Twilight*** teen Bella Swan moves from Phoenix, Arizona to the rainy little town of Forks, Washington to live with her sheriff father after her mother meets someone new. Bella is a pleasant enough girl, if something of a quiet outsider in that she's not very interested in being part of the "in-crowd". So when she begins school in her new locale she doesn't expect life to change all that drastically. However she quickly becomes intensely interested in a good-looking, mysterious, and extremely pale classmate named Edward Cullen. The young man is part of an equally mysterious and pale-looking group, and it's obvious right away they are different from other kids at the school. It's also obvious there is an attraction between Bella and Edward, even if he pretends to ignore her at first. And after Edward saves her life with an incredible feat of speed and strength, Bella realizes that he's not only intelligent and beautiful, but there's also something otherworldly about him as well. It turns out Edward is a vampire. Upon learning this Bella falls even more head over heels in love with him than she already was.

***Twilight*** is a compelling Romeo & Juliet-style love story between two outsiders. Bella is an outsider for reasons mentioned previously, and Edward is from a family of vampires, and as such will always be an outsider no matter how many high schools he attends in his infinite lifespan. These characters are immediately interesting and worth watching because the two leads in this film do an incredible job in making them that way. I especially liked Kristen Stewart as Bella. The young actress imbues the character with an independent outsider spirit, while at the same time making her sympathetic and someone we can easily relate to. And Robert Pattinson, while obviously appealing to the young female target audience, makes Edward seem both aloof and likable at the same time. The two provide strong screen presences, and have many great scenes together. I especially liked some of the subtly comical moments in the movie, such as a scene where Edward is watching Bella eat in a restaurant and comments that he can't read her mind like he can others. She responds with concern over the possibility that something is wrong with *her*, a response Edward finds amusing. And other scenes in which the young couple simply profess their love for one another are not cheesy or boring, but rather believable and poetic. Simply put, both the story and acting in ***Twilight*** were very strong, and the movie easily held my attention from start to finish.

I should also mention that in addition to the eloquent romance the movie contains other pluses such as a good supporting cast, nice cinematography, gripping action, and some horrific moments as well. This is, after all, a vampire movie and (as they say) yes there will be blood. Will Edward be unable to control his vampire lust and drink Bella's sweet blood in a carnal frenzy? Will a ruthless vampire from another clan feast upon her before her lover can come to the rescue? Will Edward turn Bella into one of his kind so they can consummate their undying love and be together forever? Those are just some of the questions to be answered, and I wouldn't dream of including any spoilers here for those who haven't seen this surprisingly good 2008 vampire film.