

The saga of love and eternity: the story of one love

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



When you think about Twilight, most think of it as a throw away tween film. It caters to a female dominated audience with magical creatures and a drama filled loved story. Your first thoughts might be of sparkly vampires and obsessed tween-aged fans. You may remember Kristen Stewarts lack luster performance as the lead Bella Swan, or maybe the teen men that turn into wolves. But what may not come to mind is the people that those wolf characters are based upon and how the movie Twilight lead to over tourism, tribal designs being sold as jewelry, and the overall commercialization of their culture that came with the involvement of a big movie series.

The isolated, small reservation of the Quileute people sits in La Push at the mouth of the Quillayute River in Washington. Once upon a time, before Twilight, this place was quiet. At this time author Stephanie Meyers not only chose a real place for the setting of her book, but also chose to use a real Native American tribe for the werewolf characters. While the filming of this movie never made it to the actual area of the reservation, it has turned into a tourist destination for thousands of Twi-hards. “ The website “ A Travel Guide to Forks, Washington” contains information about traveling to Forks, lodging, Twilight locations, products, and tours. Tours include stops at actual and recreated sites such as the high school, the Swan and Cullen houses, the beach at La Push”. For the Quileute Tribe, this led to a battle for “ the rights to their own oral histories, ancient regalia and mask designs, and even the sanctity of their cemetery.”

The original story of the Quileute where Qwati transformed the first Quileute people from wolves to human. Meyer’s redefined their culture to fit the needs of her book, taking what was regarded as scared ideals and re-writing

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their identity to that of magical werewolves. She said that all Quileute could turn into these werewolves, which went completely against their tradition. She even over sexualizes a main character, Jacob, who is part of the Quileute Tribe. In her book, Meyer's describes Jacob as " russet skin...bare-chested, wearing nothing but a pair of old cut-off jeans". He is portrayed similarly in the movie, including multiple shirtless scenes,. These are used to make for a quick wolf change or show of his tribal tattoo. He is a " hot" Indian, overly macho and seen with very little money. On the other hand, the vampire family the Cullens, are dressed in finer clothes and live in a giant modern mansion. This can easily be seen as racial stereotypes. Whether planned or not, Meyer's designed her story to make the Native Americans look poorer against the highly educated and rich white Vampires.

From the popularity of this small Native American tribe came over tourism and commercialization of their culture as well. The Quileute suddenly saw an increase of visitors to the a one mile wide reservation they had been forced to move to. Some tribe members have been happy with an influx of customers, and their elders remind them that " we know that the story is fiction, we know who we are." It can be great to have an economic growth to their area, but were the scamming comes in, is with the selling of Twilight werewolf merchandise. Stores such as Hot Topic, Nordstorm, and even the website Redbubble, benefitted from deals with Summit Entertainment who produced the movies. They sold items with La Push, werewolves, Jacob's tribal tattoo, things that even represented the Quileute tribe or its made up characters. While Twilight grossed around \$600 million per film, the Quileute did not see a penny. " Whether outsiders are free to appropriate tribal

cultural property. For the sake of fairness as much as law, indigenous peoples must play a significant role in decisions regarding their cultural property.” Twilight is why the Quileute tribe is gaining so much attention from the outside world, yet they remain excluded from the series commercial empire.