

Holiday VIEWING

After endless shopping trips, parties and too many relatives, get back into the holiday spirit with these original TV holiday movies.

BY SANDI BERG

AN OLD-FASHIONED THANKSGIVING HALLMARK



Jacqueline Bisset with family. Photo: Brooke Palmer/©2008 Crown Media

Anything that brings the luminous Jacqueline Bisset (*The Deep*, *Joan of Arc*) back to the screen has to be worth a closer look. Based on a short story by Louisa May Alcott, this family drama set in the 1880s is a timeless story about a headstrong girl yearning to be a writer. Tatiana Maslany (*Diary of the Dead*) plays Tilly, a 17-year-old who writes a letter to the grandmother she's never met, signing her mother's name. However, her mother has been estranged from the family for marrying a man they disapproved of, and Tilly's action sets off a series of events that could force her to choose between a life of wealth and splendor with her grandmother, or poverty with her newly widowed mother. ♦

Saturday, Nov. 22 at 9:00 pm

MOONLIGHT & MISTLETOE HALLMARK



Tom Arnold with Candace Cameron Bure. Photo: E.J. Camp/2008 Crown Media

This heartwarming family film gives us Tom Arnold (*True Lies*) as a father and owner of Santaville, a small theme park attraction in Vermont on the verge of bankruptcy. His daughter, Candace Cameron Bure (*Full House*), no longer believes in the magic of Christmas, but in an inspiring story of faith and magic, father and daughter come together to save their magical wonderland. ♦

Saturday, Nov. 29 at 9:00 pm

CHRISTMAS IN WONDERLAND ABC FAMILY CHANNEL

The holidays are looking grim for the Saunders family. They've moved to a new town where they don't know anyone, they're totally broke, and Christmas spirit is nowhere in sight. Things begin to change when 12-year old Brian and 6-year old Mary find a bag full of money. Not knowing that the bills are counterfeit, they head for the mall in search of holiday cheer. The fun begins when the crooks who stole the money come after the kids at the mall filled with holiday shoppers. Stars Carmen Electra (*Scary Movie 4*) and Patrick Swayze (*Dirty Dancing*). ♦



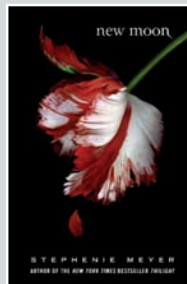
Patrick Swayze photo: Bob D'Amico/ABC Family

Saturday, Dec. 20 at 8:00 pm

I Want to Read Your Book

Stephenie Meyer's Twilight series

BY LIZ LAING



Whether or not Count Dracula (or even the real life model for his film character, Romanian Brav Dracul) ever actually said, "I want to suck your blood," millions of American children grew up quoting it as they hunched their shoulders and lunged in mock menace at their playmates. Now the vampires get their revenge.

In Stephenie Meyer's best-selling *Twilight* series, a young girl falls in love with one of these predatory creatures. If you've somehow missed the vampire phenom, complete with Harry Potter-esque release events at Borders and Barnes & Noble, you'll see it soon. The film made from Meyer's first book in the series hits the big screen November 21.

In just a few short years, Meyer has sold over 8 million books, becoming an international publishing star often compared to J.K. Rowling.

The author's third book, *Eclipse*, knocked aside the esteemed Mr. Potter to become the No. 1 best-seller. Her fourth and final book of the series, *Breaking Dawn*, sold an estimated 1.3 million copies nationwide within 24 hours of its release last August. Feverish fans eagerly ravaged the pages to find out whether or not heroine Bella would leave her human existence behind to join her vampire lover, Edward, in eternity.

A genius at cross-marketing, Meyer also created play lists for each of her novels and teamed with singer/songwriter Justin Furstenfeld of Blue October for a sold-out *Breaking Dawn* concert series in select cities. Not bad for a mother of three who had never written a book before.

Why vampires? It all started while she was asleep. Meyer dreamed about a girl and a vampire falling in love with each other, but the vampire, tantalized by the scent of her blood, was having a difficult time restraining himself from killing the girl. The author began writing when she woke up, and continued until she had a 500-page novel two months later.

Unlike many dark, bloodthirsty vampire novels of the past, Meyer's "good" vampires don't drink human blood. Nonetheless, falling in love with a vampire poses some serious threats as Edward and the others struggle to control their natural desires, finding that it isn't always easy to be good.

"No matter what position you're in, you always have a choice," said Meyer in an interview with *School Library Journal*.

Maybe. But if you're in love with the girl, this is one time when abstinence is unquestionably the better option. ♦