

**L**aura Morris last had a date three years ago. She quit her job soon after and now a night out with mates is a rare occasion. It's not that she isn't attractive, bright or sociable – but since becoming infatuated with Jedward, she's put her own life on the backburner.

Laura is one of a new breed of celebrity superfan. She has spent around £18,000 following Irish twins John and Edward Grimes, 20, across Europe. She has been to every one of their 150 concerts since they appeared on *The X Factor* in 2009, and even left her office administrator job in 2010 to temp so she could work around their tours.

Her family and friends think she's nuts, but Laura, 29, from Poole, Dorset, says: "It's no different to being a football fan and getting a season ticket. Jedward make me feel good about myself."

While her fixation may be harmless, psychologists warn that becoming too obsessed can be dangerous.

a boyfriend. I don't have to make a commitment, but they're always there."

She first spotted John and Edward in the queue at London's O2 to audition for *The X Factor*. While she didn't make it, the twins astonished everyone by reaching the live shows. Laura says she spotted their talent immediately.

"They were in front of me in the queue and though we barely spoke, I thought they looked interesting at the time. I went to see them perform at a live show that October. They were so entertaining and, personally, I think they're good singers. I was sucked in by their infectious personalities."

It was the start of a love affair that has even seen her hire a minibus to follow them across Austria. She speaks to *Fabulous* on the phone from Ireland – where Jedward are on a 23-date tour.

Laura is there with best friend Julie, 52, who she met on a Jedward tour. They got on so well that psychotherapist Julie is moving to Poole to be near her. Both are fiercely protective of Jedward.



# Rise of the SUPERFAN

Meet the women who are putting their OWN LIVES on hold for their CELEBRITY OBSESSIONS BY ANTONIA HOYLE

"Caring about celebrities too much is unhealthy for our own sense of self and our relationships, and can cause depression, anxiety and poorer body image," warns psychologist Jim Houran.

While this may not be true of Laura, her obsession has resulted in debt, and she has been single for three years.

"I haven't come close to dating," she says. "Being a Jedward fan is better than having

"I get angry when I'm in nightclubs and see people throwing shoes and bottles at them. I've never got into a fight, but I've told people to leave them alone," says Laura. "They don't drink or smoke and are a breath of fresh air. They spend hours talking to their fans."

Though she loves them both, Laura admits to being more partial to John than Edward. "Edward is more of the leader, but John and I understand each other," she reckons. "I fancy him and obviously I'd like him to be my boyfriend, but that will never happen. I think he's flattered but embarrassed, and isn't

looking for a girlfriend."

Yet her loyalty has not gone unrewarded. "John knows my name, makes eye contact at gigs and gives me a hug when I see him," she says. "He makes it special."

## Different PRIORITIES

**F**or Emma Clark, it was the *Twilight* franchise that gave her life meaning. She has been hooked since she picked up the first book four years ago. "Before *Twilight* I had no life. I went to work and came







Clockwise from top left: Charlotte and Katie Price, Emma with Jedward (twice), Emma and Taylor Lautner, Charlotte and Katie, Emma and Jedward, and Emma with Kellan Lutz

home. *Twilight's* the reason I get up in the morning," says the 25 year old.

Emma was horrified when news broke that her heroine – *Twilight's* Kristen Stewart – had cheated on co-star and real-life boyfriend Robert Pattinson.

## 'I've been to ALL of JEDWARD'S 150 concerts'

Such was Emma's fury that she herself made headlines, after posting a hysterical video on YouTube expressing her shock at what she saw as a personal betrayal, then branding Kristen a "hussy" on Twitter. The video became a sensation – the latest of 185 mainly *Twilight*-related films she's posted online.

"I was shocked it got to me the way it did, and by the public reaction, but I don't regret what I said," says Emma. "I was angry with Kristen. She let

the fans down and made a mockery of everything. Her behaviour is going to detract from the [final *Twilight*] film." She adds – without irony: "I'd ignore Kristen if I were ever to see her, because I don't think she deserves any attention. She needs to earn our respect back."

As for her own online outburst, Emma, who works in a pawnbrokers, admits: "People have told me I should give up and get a life. But it's none of their business, and my family and friends are proud of me for being honest and not changing who I am."

In addition to stockpiling books and posters at her home in Carlisle, Cumbria, where she lives with her parents, Emma has had a "BS" tattoo, which stands for "Bella Swan". She also goes along to *Twilight* conventions in Birmingham, which include vampire-themed parties.

"I look forward to them so much," she says. "I've turned up covered in blood, wearing red contact lenses and a cape. I'm surrounded by people who are the same as me and don't judge me for being different."

Emma even paid £600 at an auction to have dinner with Canadian actor Christopher Heyerdahl, who plays vampire Marcus in the *Twilight* films *New Moon* and *Breaking Dawn*.

"I've spent about £6,000 on *Twilight* over four years – mostly on conventions. If I need extra money I work overtime, and I've borrowed money from a friend who knew what it was for."

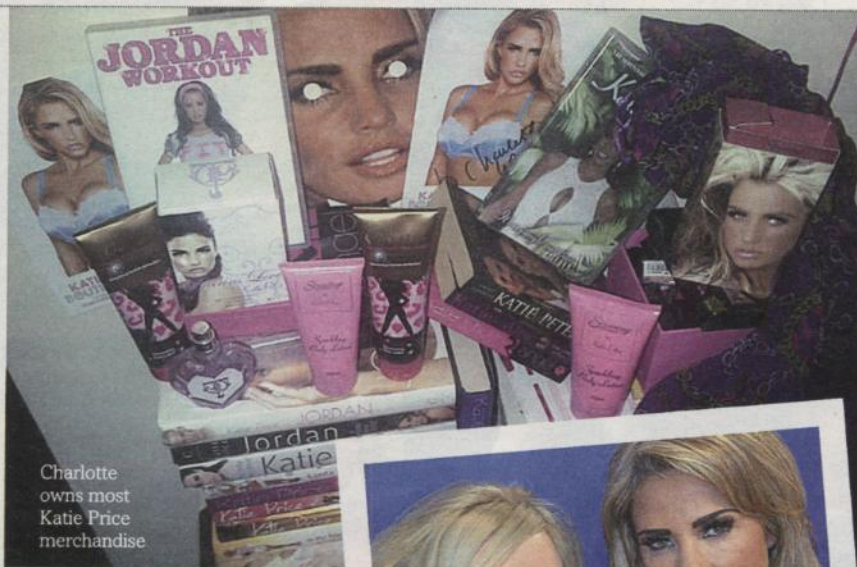
She's single at the moment, but says it's not due to a crush on heart-throb Robert Pattinson, who has heard about her videos. "Someone pointed me out at a premiere. He said: 'video girl!', and hugged me. I was blown away," she says.

## Unhealthy OBSESSION

Craig Jackson, professor of psychology at Birmingham City University, says it's the internet that is helping fuel the superfan phenomenon – with easier access to celebrities than ever before through their tweets, blogs and websites.

He says: "While most of us are →





Charlotte owns most Katie Price merchandise

happy to read a celebrity's Twitter feed, or watch our favourite actor in a show, at the end of the day we go back to our everyday lives, our jobs, and our families.

"But superfans don't find it so easy. They need to stay in a comforting place, where life doesn't consist of everyday drudgery. It might seem a slightly odd thing to do to a lot of us, but for them it's harmless behaviour that makes them happy.

"But some superfans go too far. Their obsession leads to stalking and even psychotic episodes – and that's when we need to worry."

## Fan BENEFITS

**H**owever, there are upsides to taking an interest in a famous personality.

"Low levels of celebrity worship are normal and can actually be healthy. They promote bonding among people through fan clubs or by talking about their shared interest in the office or the pub," says Dr Houran.

Superfan Charlotte Thorpe, 20, says there's a very positive side to her infatuation with Katie Price – it has given her a pride in her appearance that she previously lacked. She was insecure about the way she looked when she decided to go to a Katie Price book signing at her local shopping centre in Warrington, Cheshire, in November 2009.



With her idol Katie

## 'Now Katie Price FOLLOWS ME on TWITTER'

"I wasn't a massive fan before," she says. "I just wanted to go along and meet Katie and see what she was like."

Inexplicably overwhelmed by the experience, she can't remember much of what was said during their brief meeting that day – other than that Katie told her that she "smelled nice".

"I was overcome by adrenalin and crying hysterically," says Charlotte. "I was shifted along the queue quickly, but I was so excited."

From that moment, Charlotte was infatuated. She read all Katie's books, bought all four of her perfumes, recorded all her reality television series and set about telling anyone who would listen how wonderful Katie was.

"I loved the way she was brave enough to say what she thought," she says. "She took things on the chin and was down to earth. Her personality rubbed off on me. I learned from her relationship mistakes and made sure

I didn't get walked all over. I can be just as hard work and demanding as Katie!"

But it was Katie's signature girly appearance that had the most impact. "I'd always been a tomboy and lived in jeans," says Charlotte, who works in a perfume shop. "I loved Katie's glamour, her pink and glitter and the way she looked like a Barbie doll. She inspired me to look the same."

## Changing LIVES

**C**harlotte dyed her mousy brown hair a peroxide blonde, and invested in weekly spray tans and monthly nail appointments. She began wearing false eyelashes and clip-on hair extensions every day, spending nearly £1,000 a year on her new grooming routine.

She also lost 2st, shrinking from a size 20 to a size 16. "At the first signing all the other fans were thin like Katie, and I thought she'd never notice me if I was bigger," she explains.

Charlotte's boyfriend of five years, computer studies student Danny Harris, 23, wasn't quite so impressed with her Katie-inspired makeover, though.

"He wanted me to look natural," she says. "We had a lot of arguments about it, but he's come to accept it now."

Charlotte's friends – who had long since passed their teenage Katie Price phase – were also baffled. "I've got into arguments defending her before, but I'm known around town for being her biggest fan," she says.

Charlotte has now seen Katie at four book signings and become – if not a bosom buddy – an acquaintance of sorts. She's so devoted a fan she was spotted by producers at a book signing and ended up appearing on Katie's ITV2 reality show, *What Katie Did Next*.

"Katie seems to like me and she even follows me on Twitter. She'll ask me about my fake tan, or where I got my shoes, and lets me touch her hair extensions."

They aren't exactly heart-to-hearts, but Charlotte hopes for more.

"I'd love to be her best friend," she says. "We're on the same wavelength."

They may well be. But wouldn't it be nice if Charlotte – and all the other superfans like her – tried putting themselves first for a change? **f**

**Tell us what you think on Twitter #FabMagSuperfans**