

'New Moon' fails to disappoint

By Kayla Calloway
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I went in with the understanding that I was going to be disappointed. When I came out, I found that I was actually wrong.

Friday night, I drove down to the Regal Cinemas in Wilsonville to see the latest installment in the Twilight Saga, "New Moon." After the fiasco that was "Twilight," I had every right to be worried about the quality of this movie.

I'm a fan of the books, well, most of them, and "New Moon" is by far my favorite of the series. I feared that Summit

Entertainment and director Chris Weitz would take my love of the book and smash it into a million tiny, sparkling pieces.

I was pleasantly surprised, however, by how well the movie was made.

In its opening weekend, "New Moon" raked in over \$140 million, making it the third highest blockbuster in Hollywood history, under "The Dark Knight" and "Spiderman 3."

At first, admittedly, I was being overly critical, but I realized that I was probably ruining the experience for my mother, who came with me as a birthday gift, and those unfortunate enough to sit close enough to

hear my complaints such as "No, that's wrong. Jake isn't supposed to see her on her birthday." So, I zipped my lips, relaxed and let the story take me along for the ride.

For all those out there that are not familiar with the series, here's a quick summary of the movie: Bella Swan and Edward Cullen are a young and in-love couple, with a kicker; Edward is in fact a vampire. This fact does not matter to Bella. It does to Edward. He doesn't want to put Bella in danger, so he leaves, sending her spiraling into depression that is accompanied by uncontrollable pain and horrific nightmares.

Four months pass like this, and Bella discovers that the pain is relieved when she does something reckless, like hopping on the back of some stranger's motorcycle. In addition to the relief of pain, she also sees and hears Edward. She tries to keep that hallucination around by putting her life in danger. She teams up with her best friend, Jacob Black, a Native American boy from the nearby Quileute reservation, and together they rebuild a pair of crappy dirt bikes. During this process, their relationship grows and deepens, and Bella finds herself needing Jake.

Meanwhile, something odd is happening to the boys on the rez. Suddenly, Jake falls ill and stops talking to Bella. When she goes to investigate, she discovers that he has changed into a werewolf. Looks like Bella just can't get away from monsters.

While Jake and his wolf pack are off trying to protect Bella from Victoria, a vampire from the first movie, Bella lapses back into that pain that Edward had left her with. So, in order to relieve the hurt and possibly, to hear and see that hallucination once more, she does the only thing that makes sense to her: she jumps off a cliff into the freezing Pacific Ocean. When she comes home, she finds Alice Cullen, Edward's sister, who is very surprised to find Bella alive.

The story climaxes with Alice and Bella hopping a flight to Italy to save Edward from killing himself over the loss of Bella.

Although not every tiny detail of the book was present in the movie, what they did keep and what they added fit nicely. They added some great comedic lines for the lesser characters which helped to really give them personality and make them seem a little less flat. Even the fight scene that was added, the one from the trailer that I

was so very much dreading, was a taste. It wasn't just thrown in for tension.

The details that were left out were perfectly acceptable. I know that you keep every word of a 400 page book when you're trying to translate that to film. I understand that the quest for the meadow wasn't nearly as important as showing Bella and Jacob's relationship, and was therefore understood that it is hard to tell a story in a film that was primarily told in first person narrative.

Weitz compensated for this loss with an addition to the story that I was unsure about. In the movie, Bella tells Alice about what is happening in the future via e-mail. Of course, every time you click the "send" icon, the automated response is a message failure notice. This does her from continuing to write the e-mail.

Enough about the story itself. The movie had some of the best computer-generated werewolves I think I've ever seen. That it is CG, but what isn't nowadays? Quality was leaps and bounds better than movies such as "Underworld" and "The Chocolate."

Also, little improvements were made to things that were present in "Twilight." For example, the vampires didn't look like they were sick. The circles under their eyes weren't as obviously fake, although it looks like Edward dipped into his lipstick stash with his overly red lips.

Even the infamous sparkle was done compared to the first movie. It looked quite like body glitter was used on Edward's skin.

Rob Pattinson, who plays as Edward, and Kristen Stewart, Bella, both improved their on-screen chemistry for this movie. The love scenes weren't nearly as awkward and that may or may not be a direct relation to their supposed off-screen relationship. Either way, it made the movie much more believable, and yet the relationship between Bella and Edward was more realistic.

All in all, it's a pretty decent movie. Summit definitely improved on the first and definitely made the right decision signing on Weitz to direct. Although I imagine that only people who are fans of the books or the series in general will shell out \$10 to see "New Moon." If you liked the book, or "Twilight," you'll probably like this adaptation.



Photo illustration by Kayla Berge and Brian Steele Clackamas Print

