

Tweeniboppers wait in 'Twilight' for last bite of saga

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With a snarl, a growl, an earth shatteringly epic battle, a whimper and a sigh, it's finally over: "Twilight" has met its end.

At 12:01 a.m. Friday morning, to the screaming, giggling, star struck masses, "Twilight: Breaking Dawn Part II" hit the silver screen to the elation, joy and relief of fans everywhere. Kristen Stewart made her last appearance as the sullen and saccharine sweet Bella Swan.

Robert Pattinson made his last appearance as the glittery and brooding Edward Cullen. Taylor Lautner made his last appearance as the bronzed and built Jacob Black. I for one, couldn't be more pleased... that it is finally frickin' over.

Lionsgate and Summit Entertainment embellished and blew out of proportion the second half of the fourth novel, by the now household name of Stephenie Meyer.

Right off the bat, I was a little thrown. While I knew this film would pick up where the last left off, I didn't expect it to feel so mini-series-ish. As if we hadn't waited a year and a half and were merely watching the films back to back or perhaps the next week or the next day - in other words, surely not long enough that "Breaking Dawn: Part I" has already begun to collect dust.

There was no transition, it just began. The others carried the tradition of Bella's morose narration, whereas in this incarnation, that anticipated simple tone didn't overlay a scene until seemingly 20 to 30 minutes in. This break in familiarity was a sure indication that this was not in fact the fifth film of the series, but the second half of the fourth film.

While at first I was confused with the decision to split the final arc of the story into two parts, who could deny the box office bang that the sly venture would bring? This is, of course, the part of the story where a stake is finally driven through the larger-than-life "Team Edward" and "Team Jacob" feud, proving to movie goers (and those who didn't actually read the books) there in fact never was a choice.

Spoiler alert: badass Jacob only has eyes for Edward

and Bella's miracle spawn, an eating, breathing, blood ravenous child with whom he falls madly in love with at first squirming newborn sight. Does this add or remove from the glamour of the whole spiel? Eh, if you read the books, you saw it coming. If you didn't, I hope you were disturbed.

As expected, Renesmee (the spawn child mentioned above), portrayed by the adorable relative newcomer Mackenzie Foy, stole each and every scene she was in. Cute kids have a way of doing that in films, especially when given divine abilities and eerie amber contact lenses.

Luckily, Foy also conveyed a sense of wonderment and intelligence that was well beyond her 12 years. It brought a little of what I felt was lost from her character and abilities in the storyline of the final film.

Pattinson and Lautner delivered classic performances. Both were cocky and confident with pretty boy lashes and matching crooked grins. Stewart's character Bella, at last realizing her own beauty and ability, finally has a chance to smile. It was nice to see a little diversity in the young actress' part.

Billy Burke's portrayal of Charlie Swan again provided a mix of light hearted humor and awkward love and concern. Carlisle Cullen, played by Peter Facinelli, along with Charlie, have been my favorite characters brought to life thus far, and this finale was no exception.

Fathers of the bride and groom, Charlie and Carlisle both have grown upon the words originally written upon the page for their characters and become the voices within the books. That's a glorious and rare feature now a days. A number of other newcomers appeared in this finale as the Cullen family prepares for yet another impending visit from the ruthless Volturi, the Italian "royal family."

While many of these characters were under appreciated and diminished through big screen production, there were a few that still retained a glimmer of their interest and humor like the roaming nomad Garrett's (Lee Pace) mumble "the red coats are coming," as the Volturi approached.

As the movie trailer teased, it all led to a showdown. When all the pretty people stood ankle deep within an open field, set against a backdrop of pure,

untouched and untarnished factitious paper snow in what might have pivotal moment in the story, serenity was interrupted with a staggeringly unexpected battle that had me (and hopefully everyone else who muscled through the books) wondering, "wait... what?"

As epic as the battle was, as sad as the losses were as they fell defeated and as justified, well placed and well executed as the "oh duh!" realization of it was, it fell flat. That particular moment left me feeling like the conclusion of the original "Dallas" series when you learn that it was all just a dream and the audience feels as if it was cheated out of something precious, meaningful.

Many of the special effects left a lot to be desired. Details I had hoped to see played out were downplayed. A few scenes felt like an afterthought, like something plugged in without regard to flow. This included the few moments before the credits rolled that should have wrapped the whole thing up in a tight, neat crimson bow.

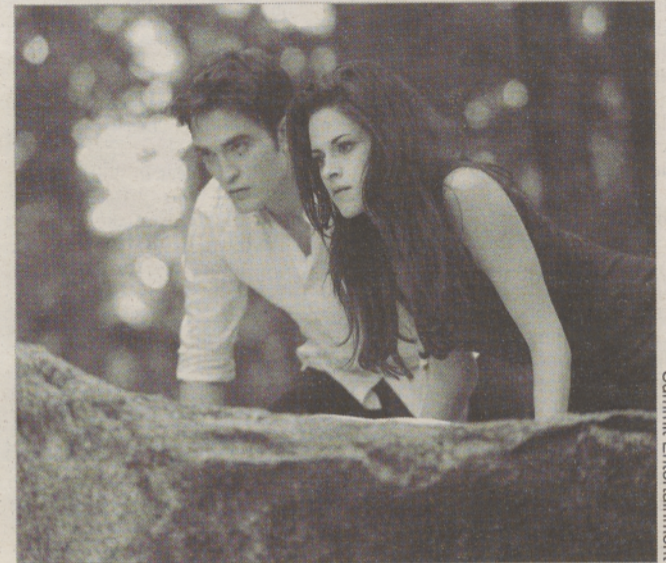
Overall, I'm not begging for a refund, but I'm not necessarily satisfied either. I give it three out of five stars, though

the gratuity of the third star comes simply with the relief that it is indeed completely, irrevocably, finally over.

As the series has finally come to an end, it's time for reflection. For an opinionated look

back on the complete "Twilight Saga," visit us online at www.TheClackamasPrint.com.

★★★★☆
3 OUT OF 5 STARS



Summit Entertainment

From the "Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2," Bella Swan (Kristen Stewart) prowls the woods in search of her first vampire meal as husband Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson) teaches her to use her newly enhanced abilities.



Summit Entertainment

From the "Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2," Bella Swan (Kristen Stewart) celebrates with her family, daughter Renesmee (Mackenzie Foy), husband Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson) and friend Jacob Black (Taylor Lautner), thoughtful of a promising future.

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