

## Interview: Kellan Lutz in ‘The Twilight Saga: New Moon’ on Chicago, Satiating Fans

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CHICAGO – “The Twilight Saga: New Moon” knows what it is, what it isn’t and how to quench fans. It can’t say the same, though, for outsiders.



Rating: **2.5**/5.0

Sure, there’s no practical reason why Taylor Lautner as the dark and mysterious Jacob Black would need to rip off his shirt just to wipe away a splat of forehead blood from Kristen Stewart as Bella Swan. But some pandering has been allowed – and even required this time around – in order to satiate a global legion of fans that these filmmakers have as putty in their hands.

Following Catherine Hardwicke’s direction of “Twilight,” which began the phenomenon of a \$37 million film that grossed \$384 million globally, director Chris Weitz knew he had to graduate from a lake to an ocean in the sequel that even more fans have been anticipating.



Kellan Lutz of “The Twilight Saga: New Moon” in Chicago on Nov. 11, 2009.

*Photo credit: Adam Fendelman of HollywoodChicago.com*

But while diehard “Twilight” fans will likely be appeased by this installment – just as in the case of the documentary [“Michael Jackson’s This is It \[16\]”](#) that really was a fan-appreciation concert film – the film’s constantly crestfallen tone, dragging 130-minute screen time and slow pacing will likely alienate those who haven’t fully embraced the saga.

The “Twilight” sequel “The Twilight Saga: New Moon,” which was written by Melissa Rosenberg and is based on the novel by Stephenie Meyer, features Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart, Taylor Lautner, Dakota Fanning, Ashley Greene, Michael Sheen, Bronson Pelletier, Nikki Reed, Jackson Rathbone, Anna Kendrick and Billy Burke.

It’s no accident that “Team Edward” (in promotion of Robert Pattinson as Edward Cullen) and “Team Jacob” (for Taylor Lautner as Jacob Black) have erupted through the film’s online viral marketing.

The two clearly compete for Bella’s affections, which makes for some steamy “PG-13” romance – that is, if you’re of the demographic this film is targeting. Otherwise, this kind of tension – as well as some of the other cheese that has been silly strung throughout the sequel – might make you mini puke in your mouth.





Kristen Stewart (left) and Robert Pattinson in “The Twilight Saga: New Moon”.

*Photo credit: Summit Entertainment*

But for some – and especially screaming girls who cry at the mere sight of the male members of this cast – the film is marketing to them in the exact way they desire. [Kellan Lutz](#) [9], who plays Emmett Cullen in “Twilight,” “The Twilight Saga: New Moon” and “The Twilight Saga: Eclipse,” has mastered the art of fan appreciation and knows too well how to react when situations get emotional.

“You give ‘em a hug, they wet your shirt and they freak out and faint. Then the paramedics are there. It’s great,” Kellan Lutz said in a Chicago interview with critic Adam Fendelman of HollywoodChicago.com.

Along with making his way to Chicago a couple times for contractual fan appreciation, Lutz also blew into the Windy City recently to film “A Nightmare on Elm Street,” which is currently in post-production and is slated to hit theaters on April 30, 2010. The film features Jackie Earle Haley (of “Watchmen” fame) as the famous Freddy Krueger.

“I love coming to (Chicago),” Lutz said. “I’m a big weather freak. I grew up in the Midwest. I love wind. Because of the wind, my favorite color growing up was clear. Then my teacher said: ‘That’s not a color.’ I love the layout. It’s so clean. I loved running with (“A Nightmare on Elm Street”) producers Andrew (Form) and (Bradley Fuller). They’re into running around the city. They asked me to run into the beach with them. I was like: ‘There’s a beach here?’ We ran there and it was freezing, but it was so nice.”



Left to right: Alex Meraz as Paul, Kiowa Gordon as Embry Call, Chaske Spencer as Sam Uley, Taylor Lautner as Jacob Black and Bronson Petteltier as Jared in “The Twilight Saga: New Moon”.

*Photo credit: Summit Entertainment*

He added: “The parks are amazing. It’s such a free and open city. It’s nice being in a city that’s surrounded by water that doesn’t have docks, harbors and huge industrial plants on the edges. It’s a beautiful place. I wish we were outside doing this interview. It’s so nice out. Living in Los Angeles, it’s like paradise every day. It’s like going to an amusement park every single day and riding the same rides.”

Lutz continued: “I’m such a season guy. I love the snow and the rain and gloomy days are nice. And there’s some great eating in Chicago, too. I miss the Midwest and I try to go back. I’m an outdoor freak. I especially (love) the woods and nature. (I love to) take my truck and go to Iowa where my grandparents live and lay on the haystacks and stare at the stars.”

After making us feel warm and fuzzy about the city in which he was interviewing, Lutz discussed how he feels about his very minor role in the “Twilight” films as compared to the other Hollywood work he’s done so far and where this phenomenon might fit in the filmography of the rest of his career. Lutz says he hopes this franchise ends up *not* being his career trademark.

“I really pray that I can act for the rest of my life,” Lutz said. “I fell into acting when going to school at Chapman (University) in Orange County, Calif. for chemical engineering. My life has definitely branched off in a direction I never knew existed. I never knew you could just be an actor. I never had the dream to be an actor.”





Kristen Stewart in “The Twilight Saga: New Moon”.

*Photo credit: Summit Entertainment*

Lutz took a risk by quitting school “for a callback for a student film. I thought a callback was huge. I was like: ‘Mom, this is my chance.’ She said: ‘I will hurt you. I will spank you.’ I said: ‘I could be the next Brad Pitt! You don’t understand.’ I had no idea. She was just scared for me because of a lack of knowledge. I did the callback and didn’t get the job. That was the day of finals. I got all zeroes and screwed up my scholarships.”

He added: “From that point on, my mom said I won’t make it. So many people said I needed a plan to fall back on. And when people tell me I can’t do something, it makes me want to do it. My mom said: ‘At least have a fallback plan and take college courses online.’ I said: ‘I don’t need a fallback plan because I’m not going to fail.’”

Lutz continued: “I got myself into acting classes, did extra work and found this passion I loved. Financially, it was tough. I was eating the dollar menu at McDonald’s for a long time. I got jobs in retail. But I view acting as a hobby. Fifty years from now, I hope I’m still acting. I won’t view ‘Twilight’ as being trademarked or stereotyped by it because we’re vampires portraying humans. But it’s a huge launching pad. It’s an actor’s dream to be a part of something so successful and have fans that are so amazing. People work 20 years to be a part of something like this.”

Lutz says he hopes this franchise can continue to ride the wave of popularity just as the Harry Potter films have.



Taylor Lautner in “The Twilight Saga: New Moon”.

*Photo credit: Summit Entertainment*

“They’re even making a theme park for (the Harry Potter film franchise),” Lutz said. “For us, we’re vampires who don’t age. With Harry Potter, they’re allowed to age. You grow with their characters. It’d be really tough to be in their shoes. I know they shot on location for longer periods of time than we do. It’s been a seven- to 10-year journey for them and it’s still not done. What’s amazing about our cast is we’re all of an age of knowing who we are inside and out. It keeps us very humble and down to earth. We grow and we do this magic carpet ride together. It’s nice to have someone to lean on.”

Lutz, who has been spending a lot of time working with this cast (and has but a few lines in the second film), is used to having a large family in real life, too. He now has his real family as well as his “Twilight” family.

“I definitely feel like I’m a big brother to a lot of people in life from friends to family to cast,” Lutz said. “We really are like a family on and off screen. We hang out as much as we can. As for the things we bring forward with our characters, we’re kinda like that in real life. I love my character. He’s the protector. When people get too close, it brings out that side in me.”

Though it’s not commonly known, Lutz was actually initially asked to read for the part of the more well-known Edward Cullen, which went to the much more well-known Robert Pattinson. But Lutz claims he’s happy with how things played out.





Kellan Lutz (left) as Emmett Cullen and Nikki Reed as Rosalie Hale in “The Twilight Saga: New Moon”.

*Photo credit: Summit Entertainment*

“I had just got done playing a marine and being in Africa and killing people for (the TV mini-series) ‘Generation Kill’. Seeing the poverty that’s in Africa was depressing. Being away from my family, friends and my dog, I really just wanted to take a break from acting and resituate my life,” Lutz said. “They brought me the script and I kept on passing for Edward. He was so depressing. Then I thought: ‘What about Emmett?’ He’s easy, fun-loving, big and brawly and a cool guy. I auditioned for that and luckily got it.”

While Lutz continued to discuss his love for Emmett without remorse for not getting Edward, he did speak of the clear benefits of being a lead over a supporting character.

“Obviously I’d love to be a lead in anything. You do get more time to develop your character and make great scenes. But I also love being a part of a scene in the background and reacting. Most people don’t realize you need to be on your game whenever you’re in a scene – even when you don’t have lines. I pay attention to extras a lot. You can see the ones who are really in the moment versus the ones who are (indicating).”

For the third film, “The Twilight Saga: Eclipse” (which recently finished filming and is directed by David Slade), Lutz says Slade said: “I know there are some big scenes and some people don’t have lines, but it’s very important to still be a part of it.”

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Lutz added: “I believe that 100 percent of the time. If someone drops a bowl and no one reacts, it takes away from the dramatic bowl breaking. But if you’re genuinely in the scene, it gives the scene so much more life. It’s great to be (a supporting character) knowing you’re making a

scene better by being a part of it. It’s such an ensemble cast. Yeah, you have these three [Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart and Taylor Lautner] being the faces, but you couldn’t make these movies without all of the characters.”

Lutz says his direction from Catherine Hardwicke in the first film to Chris Weitz in the second wasn’t too different.

“Both books are different. The tones are completely different. As far as vibe goes, Catherine’s film felt more independent. Energy wise, she’s so out there. She’d say: ‘We need clouds. Come on, extras!’ On set, a lot of times it’s ‘hurry up and wait’. And you wait. And you wait. And you shoot for 20 minutes and then wait 2 more hours to set up the new shot. With Catherine, there never was downtime.”

Lutz added: “With Chris, there was a huge weight off our shoulders because the fans supported us so much the first time. We knew we did it justice. We were all at ease. We had fun with our characters and explored them more. Chris was so well-organized. If we had questions as actors, he had all the answers.”

On set and off, Lutz describes himself as a “chameleon” who’s able to blend appropriately into any situation. He concluded: “There’s a lot of Kellan in Emmett already. I live such a happy life. I try to live a stress-free life. It’s fun playing a character who’s so close to home.”

*“The Twilight Saga: New Moon” sequel, which was written by Melissa Rosenberg based on the novel by Stephenie Meyer, features Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart, Taylor Lautner, Dakota Fanning, Ashley Greene, Michael Sheen, Bronson Pelletier, Nikki Reed, Jackson Rathbone, Anna Kendrick and Billy Burke. The film is rated “PG-13” for some violence and action. It has a running time of 130 minutes and opens everywhere on Nov. 20, 2009.*



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