

## ‘The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn -- Part 1’ Hardly Even Bewitches Twi-Hards

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – The bloated franchise’s worst film without question, the fourth “Twilight” popcorn flick is a futile exercise on the disappointment of anti-climactic waiting. Waiting for something more. Waiting for something bigger. For 117 minutes, you’re waiting – for something – but just not ever getting it. It doesn’t sparkle or shine. It flickers, and then disappointingly dies.

The experience is much akin to every Chicago Cubs baseball game. Each and every time hardcore Cubs fans band together for their emotional attachment to their brand, they share the delusion that one day – even though it’s been a millennium – their team will actually win the World Series. “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1” pays more homage to that diseased Chicago Cub syndrome than it does to its Twi-hards and those who were forced to accompany them so they didn’t have to scream alone when Taylor Lautner rips off his shirt.



Robert Pattinson (left) and Kristen Stewart in “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 1”.

*Image credit: Andrew Cooper*

And Jacob does – yet again – within literally the first five seconds of the film so he can remind you he’s still got those chiseled, Photoshop-perfect abs. Then the film is all downhill from there. The star of this film isn’t even any of its on-screen humans. It’s not even any

of its vampires – though, thankfully, they’re no longer sparkly – or its nocturnal wolfs. It’s the film’s make-up and weight-loss department.

This time around, Kristen Stewart’s transformation as Bella Swan – from the healthy “I’ll love you forever, Edward” and “I beg for you to have sex with me, Edward” and “Please bite my neck and turn me into a dead, pulseless, cold, blood-sucking demon” and “Thank you for being such a great friend, Jacob, even though I’m such a teasing tramp to you” to an ugly, sickly, bony and malnourished pregnant teen with a mysterious hybrid human/vampire baby – is actually Hollywood work at its best.



Left to right: Elizabeth Reaser, Peter Facinelli, Taylor Lautner and Robert Pattinson in “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 1”.

*Image credit: Andrew Cooper*

We know that’s a long sentence in which we’re almost entirely panning the film while simultaneously also giving it a little prop, but give us some credit here. It’s challenging to find something good to say about something so bad. Want to find Lindsay Lohan now? Just check prison. Now that’s easy. This isn’t at all like that.

“The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1” should have been honest to men in its marketing. “Just don’t come,” Summit Entertainment should have conveyed. Unless you’re a dude who’s actually in touch with your emotions or likes shopping for wedding dresses all day, this film is the epitome of a stereotypical chick flick. It’s just not for you, guys. Trying to so obviously emotionally target female teens and women who like feeling young accidentally results in an overall inauthentic experience that’s nothing more than a woman’s bridal wet dream.

The film’s joyless, painfully slow “build” fizzles away without climax. We’ll repeat: This film is grandma slow. Slow as molasses. Slow as a snail. Slow as your grandpa learning the Internet. This film takes as long to get interesting as Sarah Palin would take to be elected U.S. president: never. The film only gets lukewarm when it should be burning embers. There’s been more focus on Christina Perri’s song “A Thousand Years” and Bruno Mars’ song “It Will Rain” on the film’s soundtrack than the film itself.





Left to right: Elizabeth Reaser, Maggie Grace, Casey Labow and Myanna Buring in “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 1”.

*Image credit: Andrew Cooper*

The film’s cheese shines through much more brightly than its action or plot. Cinematography this time around decides to laser focus up close and personal on people’s perfect faces – probably because they’re still young, spring chickens who aren’t hard to look at. A highly anticipated sex scene between Edward and Bella, which is much more amorous, violent and vivid in the book, underwhelms with a Disney-like “G” rating.

With a supporting cast so large, the film gives you exactly what you’d expect from many of them: a hit-or-miss experience. Some of them you can actually stand. Some painfully indicate through their acting much like a high school play. Anna Kendrick is a worthy exception who deserves to be highlighted. That girl can act, crack laughs, look good and be real. Use her more, Summit, and take speaking lines away from, for example, the uncomfortable Ashley Greene who’s so fakely primp and proper. Her inability to be genuine makes you want to vomit while feeling sorry for her at the same time.



Kellan Lutz (center) and Nikki Reed in “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 1”.



Image credit: Andrew Cooper

Going into this film, we were already offended and insulted that what should have been the final film was split into two clearly for financial purposes. We'd have forgiven your greediness if you blew us away now so part two of the finale was earned. Instead, you blew us up and angered those obligated to see the "last" last one just to get it all out of our system.

You're still going to get Twi-hards and their forced friends back in 2012, but only out of cinematic and emotional obligation instead of because you deserve it. We hope you enjoy your private jetliner while we snicker silently at your gluttony, laziness and inability to give us an actually good film. Some plot points that finally come to fruition in 2011 do provide the 2012 film with some solid storytelling ammunition, but overall this film is simply just not enough.

If you dare to continue prolonging your pain, stay for the agonizingly poorly acted Volturi sequence after credits. Even that coven of vampires seemed bored.

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While one interpretation of "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1" is that it's exclusively for fans of the franchise, Twi-hard or not your first thought when the credits roll will be: "Really? That's it? From the big 'Twilight' series, that's it?"

Yes, really, that's it – until Nov. 16, 2012 when "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2" does it all over again finally for the last time. And then, Twi-hards and normal people alike can finally stop obsessing so they can return to real life.

*"The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 1" stars Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Taylor Lautner, Kellan Lutz, Nikki Reed, Anna Kendrick, Jackson Rathbone, Ashley Greene, Billy Burke, Bronson Pelletier, Booboo Stewart, Michael Sheen, Gil Birmingham, Sarah Clarke, Ty Olsson, Peter Facinelli, Elizabeth Reaser and Christian Sloan from director Bill Condon and writer Melissa Rosenberg based on the novel by Stephenie Meyer. The film, which is rated "PG-13" for disturbing images, violence, sexuality/partial nudity and some thematic elements, has a running time of 117 minutes and opened on Nov. 18, 2011.*



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