

## Blu-Ray Review: Stars Click, But ‘Dear John’ Doesn’t Deliver

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 2, 2010 - 4:37pm

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CHICAGO – A romantic drama like “Dear John” relies SO much on the chemistry between the two leads that if it’s not there, the whole thing falls apart. No one wants to watch an ill-fated romance if they don’t believe the love story that drives it. Luckily, Channing Tatum and Amanda Seyfried have instant, palpable chemistry and that mostly carries the relatively generic and extremely cliched “Dear John” over some serious rough spots.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.0/5.0**

The words “Based on a Novel by Nicholas Sparks” are enough to send most men screaming to the nearest video game console. Yes, it’s another tale of star-crossed lovers not too dissimilar from “The Notebook,” “A Walk to Remember,” or “Nights in Rodanthe”. This is the sixth Sparks novel turned into a feature film in just over a decade and he’s practically defined a subgenre of tearjerking love stories.

The heroes this time are a soldier named John (Channing Tatum) and a young lady named Savannah (Amanda Seyfried). From the minute they lock eyes on a Charleston pier, the two clearly fall deeply in love. Well, John falls in the ocean to retrieve Savannah’s purse. Then they fall in love.



Dear John was released on Blu-ray and DVD on May 25th, 2010

Photo credit: Sony

But John's a soldier and the story happens to be taking place in 2001. When his leave ends and he heads back overseas with a promise that he will return in a year, Savannah notes that a lot can happen in twelve months. She's not kidding. Not only does 9/11 extend John's time in country but Savannah faces her own tough decisions at home. The two communicate through letters back and forth, hence the film's title. Richard Jenkins effectively co-stars as John's possibly mentally handicapped father.

"Dear John" is about whether or not love can withstand fate's cruellest enemies of time and distance. I imagine that the twists and turns that keep John and Savannah apart might be effective on the page but they start to become numbing on film. The first half-hour of the movie, in which the love between the two blossoms, is easily the most effective. Dull direction by Lasse Hallstrom and a plot that's too manipulative for its own good sags the second act and sinks the third.

And yet, the chemistry between Seyfried and Tatum makes it easy to understand why the movie made nearly \$100 million domestically and why it will have a huge following on Blu-ray. It's amazing how far chemistry can carry you as made clear by the lack of it between Seyfried co-star Christopher Egan in "Letters to Juliet" compared to what she has with Tatum in "Dear John". After seeing "Chloe" and "Juliet" before this film, I was starting to write off Seyfried but she has a presence here that proves why she's still a star to watch. She just needs the right star opposite her.

The "Dear John" Blu-ray looks excellent, as most Sony BDs seem to do when played on PS3 Blu-ray players. The 1080p HD picture is well-balanced although comes off a bit soft during the darker, night scenes. The audio mix in 5.1 DTS-HD MA is what one would expect.

#### Special Features:

- o Alternate Ending
- o Outtakes
- o Deleted and Alternate Scenes
- o A Conversation with Channing Tatum, Amanda Seyfried, and Lasse Hallstrom

*'Dear John' is released by Sony and stars Channing Tatum, Amanda Seyfried, Henry Thomas, and Richard Jenkins. It was written by Jamie Linden and directed by Lasse Hallstrom. It was released on May 25th, 2010 and is rated PG-13.*



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