

Blu-Ray Review: Talented Pair of Young Actresses Carry 'Ramona and Beezus'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 22, 2010 - 10:07am

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CHICAGO – With junk like “Marmaduke” and “Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore” pitching themselves to children like bad fast food, it can be hard for an honestly-good and genuine family film to find an audience. “Ramona and Beezus” is the kind of family offering that will hopefully find a large audience on Blu-ray and DVD. It’s no classic and far from perfect but it’s definitely a success for its target audience that could surprisingly appeal to people outside of its demographic as well.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.5/5.0**

A film like “Ramona and Beezus” must satisfy two major requirements for this critic. One, unlike most Hollywood family films, don’t talk down to your audience. Writer Beverly Cleary, the author of this film’s source material, is a multi-generational icon because she refused to write fart jokes, simple moral messages, and slapstick. She knew her readers were smarter than most writers give them credit for being and writers Laurie Craig and Nick Pustay don’t betray that fundamental outlook.

Two, recognize that much of the fight is won or lost in the casting of the title characters. Whoever cast Joey King and Selena Gomez as the title characters in “Ramona and Beezus” deserves a raise. These two young ladies are incredibly likable and one should never underestimate the value of charismatic leads in a venture like this one. You have to “like” Ramona and Beezus to care about what happens to them.



Ramona and Beezus was released on Blu-ray and DVD on November 9th, 2010

Photo credit: Fox



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Like a lot of families in 2010, the clan of Ramona (Joey King) and Beezus (Selena Gomez) are going through some tough times. The film juggles multiple plotlines as Cleary's books so often did, but a number of them spin around the fact that patriarch Robert (John Corbett), who is married to the supportive Dorothy (Bridget Moynahan), has recently lost his job just as the family has begun an expensive house-remodeling job. To keep the family solvent, Ramona even tries to get into the workforce selling lemonade and washing cars to keep them from having to sell the home.

While real-world concerns threaten to make Ramona grow up earlier than she should have to, she's also forced to deal with the fact that her impressive imagination has gone unsupported by an educational system (including Sandra Oh) that doesn't allow for made up words. Meanwhile, Dorothy goes back to work and Beezus gets up the nerve to admit that her longtime childhood friend has developed into a teenage love affair. While all of this is going down, Ramona's role model, her Aunt Bea (Ginnifer Goodwin), begins to rekindle her childhood love affair with the charming Hobart (Josh Duhamel).

It can be very difficult to take "Ramona and Beezus" at all seriously with so many competing "meanwhiles" but it is essentially an effective story of a young girl forced to deal with the disappointment that often comes with growing up. Kids shouldn't have to worry about losing their home, their best friend (as her aunt grows closer to love and has less time to hang out), or their powerful imaginations. King completely sells the character, giving a charming, delightful performance that's nearly matched by future star Gomez.

Sadly, the rest of the cast kind of lets down the title characters. Goodwin and Duhamel have zero chemistry and their romantic scenes sound like they were written by Ramona they are so cliched. Corbett and Moynahan have always been pretty bland actors but they both give flat performances even when compared to their previous work. There could have been a stronger version of "Ramona and Beezus" if the kids didn't act circles around the adults.

In the end, I love any movie that teaches kids and adults to follow their creative dreams. Without the gross-out jokes that often mar the genre and with the great work by the leads, "Ramona and Beezus" is an easy movie to like and one that I expect many who missed it in theaters will find they love.

Special Features:

- o Show & Tell Film School
- o Deleted Scenes
- o Gag Reel
- o My Ramona with Author Beverly Cleary
- o A Day in the Life of Joey King
- o DVD Version
- o Digital Copy

'Ramona and Beezus' stars Joey King, Selena Gomez, John Corbett, Bridget Moynahan, Ginnifer Goodwin, Josh Duhamel, and Sandra Oh.

It was adapted by Laurie Craig and Nick Pustay from the book by Beverly Cleary and directed by Elizabeth Allen. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on November 9th, 2010.



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