

Blu-Ray Review: Heartbreaking ‘Blue Valentine’ With Michelle Williams, Ryan Gosling

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 9, 2011 - 1:33pm

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CHICAGO – I have shown a lot of love for “Blue Valentine,” putting it in my [Top Ten Films of 2010](#) [12] while also including its stars in my piece on [The Best Performances of 2010](#) [13]. Clearly, I’m a fan. Rent the Blu-ray or DVD, hitting stores this week, and you’re likely to become one as well.



With one of the most striking debuts in years, writer/director Derek Cianfrance pulls no punches in “Blue Valentine,” chronicling the first and final chapter of a marriage. And yet, unlike a lot of similar-yet-flawed dramas, this is not some grand statement on marriage, infidelity, or love. It’s just an all-too-common story about two people who found themselves together more through circumstance than romance. It is a character study of the kind that doesn’t often get made any more and it serves as a perfect showcase for arguably the two best actors of their generation. Michelle Williams earned an Oscar nod for her work here and the fact that Ryan Gosling didn’t join her was my choice for the #1 Oscar Snub of the last awards season.



Blue Valentine
Photo credit: The Weinstein Company

Gosling stars as Dean, a likable, hard-working dude, who would even admit himself that he’s a bit unfocused. He likes his job because it allows him to drink in the morning. But he’s also loyal to his wife and a good father. He’s not your typical “marriage movie” villain. One of the most remarkable things about Cianfrance’s script for “Blue Valentine” is that there is no villain in this piece. It’s not about an alcoholic or a cheater or an unsupportive spouse – it is more about that steady, numbing decline that faces many couples, especially those who get married far too young.



Blue Valentine will be released on Blu-Ray and DVD on May 10, 2011

Photo credit: The Weinstein Company

Dean's better half is Cindy (Williams), a young lady whose love for her husband has clearly dissipated over the years if it was ever there in the first place. Through flashbacks, we learn that Dean was kind of just there at the right time for Cindy, running into her at a nursing home of all places and then refusing to walk away after an unplanned pregnancy.

"Blue Valentine" alternates between the beginning of Dean & Cindy's relationship and the end of it. It is handled 100% realistically, never feeling like the cliché that this structure could have become. The "happy" times aren't too cheesy and the end is not too melodramatic. It's more heartbreaking as we watch moments that were once cherished become stale. Seeing a relationship grow with the knowledge that it has a limited shelf life makes for a very unusual love story.

Gosling and Williams perfectly sell every minute of the emotional truth here. They seem incapable of striking emotional chords that don't feel genuine. As we head into the season where actual characters are replaced by superheroes and franchise icons, do yourself a favor and rent "Blue Valentine" to see what real acting looks like.

The Blu-ray release of "Blue Valentine" is a decent one in that the movie speaks so clearly for itself that one doesn't need too much bonus material. One wouldn't expect the making-of pieces on "Blue Valentine" to be too extensive. It's not like there are CGI moments to dissect. Instead, we get an informative commentary by Cianfrance, some long deleted scenes that really just show the two actors improvising and probably never would have been included in anywhere near the same length, and a brief making-of piece that sold the flick when it was in theaters.

Special Features:

- o Audio Commentary With Director Derek Cianfrance and Co-Editor Jim Helton
- o The Making of Blue Valentine
- o Deleted Scenes
- o Home Movies

'Blue Valentine' stars Ryan Gosling and Michelle Williams. It was written by Derek Cianfrance, Joey Curtis, & Cami Delavigne and directed by Cianfrance. It will be released on Blu-ray and DVD on May 10th, 2011. It is rated R.



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