

Film Review: ‘If I Stay’ Can’t Rinse its Too-Sudsy Soap Opera

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 22, 2014 - 8:58am

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CHICAGO – We hate it when they grow up. Chloë Grace Moretz, a former child actor, takes on a first-teen-love role, and the results are decidedly mixed. The extreme emotions, the circumstances and Ms. Moretz’s performance undermine the soapy “If I Stay.”



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

The film is told in episodic flashback, after a car accident renders the character of Moretz as a ghost-like presence over her own coma recovery. Based on a popular young adult novel, the plot is straight out of a soap opera, and the squishy narrative doesn’t help matters. The film seeks to be different, by having the main character’s parents as former rock and rollers, and it sprinkles in a few swear words, but overall the tart points can’t affect the glacial pacing – this film moved so slow it almost reversed time – and the dull approach that Moretz applies to her character felt as if she was uncomfortable in the role.

Mia (Chloë Grace Moretz) is a budding cello musician and adolescent dream queen. She lives gracefully with her brother and former rocker parents Kat and Denny (Mireille Enos and Joshua Leonard). Her biggest concerns are the letter that hasn’t arrived yet, telling her that she has got into the prestigious Julliard School of Music, and that her boyfriend Adam (Jamie Blackley) has become a successful rocker himself and has less time for her.

The family enjoys a snow day and decides to take a ride to visit relatives. While on that path, their car spins out and flips over. Mia is suddenly out of her body, observing the situation while living it in a coma. She uses the time to reflect on her life so far, while trying to comfort her relatives from her astral plane, including her grandfather (Stacy Keach). She has to decide whether to fight for life, or give in to the bright illumination she keeps seeing.

“If I Stay” opens everywhere on August 22nd. Featuring Chloë Grace Moretz, Mireille Enos, Jamie Blackley, Joshua Leonard and Stacy Keach. Screenplay adapted by Shauna Cross, from the novel by Gayle Forman. Directed by R.J. Cutler. Rated “PG-13”



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Titanic Foreshadowing: Mia (Chloë Grace Moretz) and Adam (Jamie Blackley) in 'If I Stay'
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

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