

## Film Review: Redemptive & Emotional Journey Dances in ‘Moonlight’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 29, 2016 - 1:13pm

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CHICAGO – We are all victims of our own circumstances. How we interact with this circumstance, given our DNA, social nurturing, family and relationship ties are thrown in the air like organic confetti, landing here and there, and often in smaller and smaller pieces. “Moonlight” is a film full of this absolution.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

Told in three acts, and following a man – portrayed by three different actors – from boyhood to young adulthood, “Moonlight” creates circumstances and victims all along the main character’s path, but also allows him to find his own redemption. It involves being gay in an atmosphere where acceptance of that is virtually nil, yet still we are what we are. The story is specifically acted and deliberately told, including a virtual one act play as the third act. By the end, the man in the middle finds something, providing that we’re all looking for a seed that often has already been planted, and just waiting to break the soil.

A young African American boy, nicknamed Little (Alex Hibbert), is growing up in a tough and poverty-stricken Miami neighborhood. He is being raised by Paula (Naomie Harris), a downtrodden crack addict. His only friend is Kevin (Jaden Piner), until he meets a local drug dealer named Juan (Mahershala Ali).

In high school, the same boy – whose name we find out is Chiron (Ashton Sanders) – is struggling mightily with his emerging sexual preference. Kevin (Jharrel Jerome) is still there for him, but in the jungle law of high school politics, is ready to walk away as well. Their connection in this point in life comes together again later, when their adult versions (Trevante Rhodes as Black, and André Holland as the adult Kevin) work out one more sense of their own humanity.

*“Moonlight” continued its nationwide release in Chicago on October 28th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring André Holland, Naomie Harris, Mahershala Ali, Alex Hibbert, Janelle Monae, Ashton Sanders and Trevante Rhodes. Screenplay by Barry Jenkins, from a story by Tarell McCraney. Directed by Barry Jenkins. Rated “R”*



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Little (Alex Hibbert) is Uplifted by Juan (Mahershala Ali) in ‘Moonlight’  
Photo credit: A24

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