

Blu-Ray Review: Shockingly High Levels of Melodrama Sink 'Nights in Rodanthe'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 16, 2009 - 1:15pm

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Blu-Ray Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – I have a very high threshold for melodramatic romance. I was raised on cheesy musicals and will admit to pausing on the underrated "[The Notebook](#) [13]" more than once when I pass it on cable. Having said that, I hated "[Nights in Rodanthe](#) [10]," a film that mines rarely seen lows in manipulative soap opera dreck and washes away the screen presence of two of the genre's most physically blessed stars in a sea of fake tears and ridiculous plot twists.

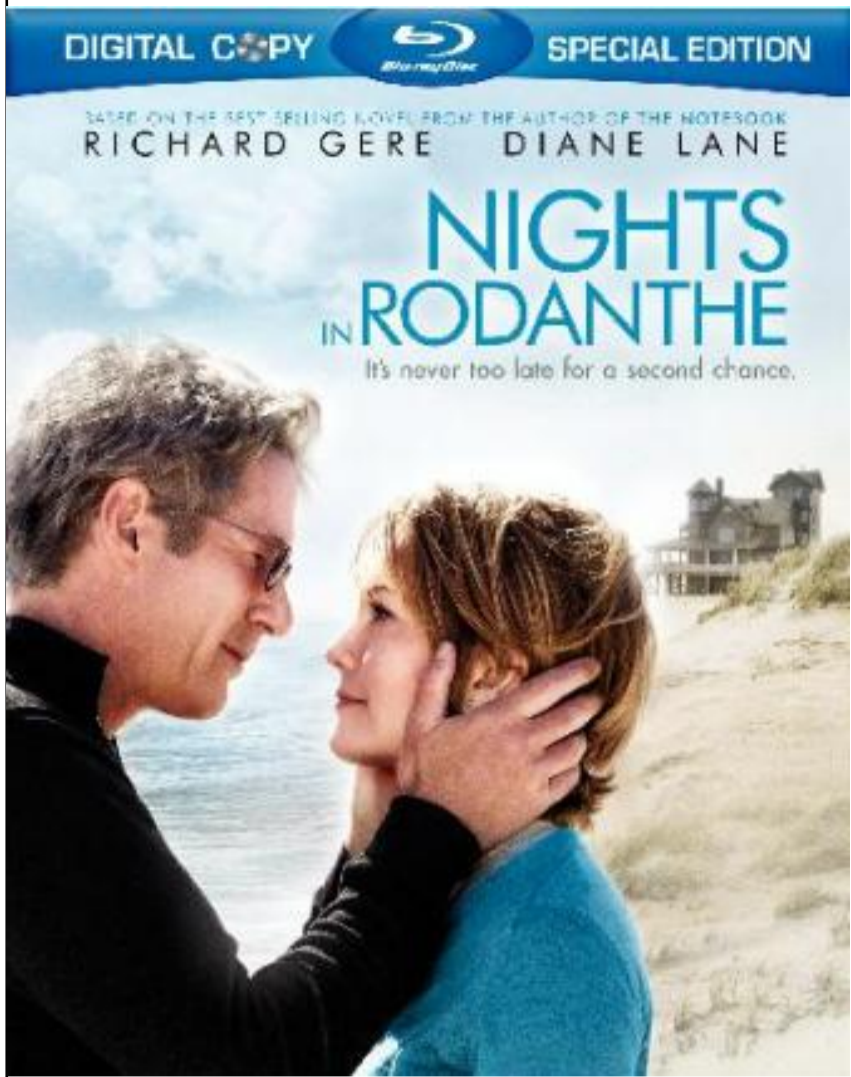
The script for "Nights in Rodanthe" by Ann Peacock and John Romano from a best-selling book by [Nicholas Sparks](#) [9] would get most writers laughed out of a pitch meeting for an episode of "[Days of Our Lives](#) [16]". I am easily moved and will admit to openly crying at films more often than a grown man should, but rarely have I seen a melodramatic script rendered more ineffective by horrendous dialogue and cliched behavior than the one for "Rodanthe".



Nights in Rodanthe is released by Warner Brothers Home Video on February 10th, 2009.

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

The two charismatic and beautiful stars of "[Unfaithful](#) [17]" - [Richard Gere](#) [11] and [Diane Lane](#) [18] - star in "Nights in Rodanthe" and prove that they still have an impressive and interesting screen chemistry. They just chose the wrong script to do so.



Nights in Rodanthe is released by Warner Brothers Home Video on February 10th, 2009.
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Gere plays Paul, a surgeon who long ago traded family for career and has had to deal with upheaval in his life after a woman died on his operating table during a routine surgery. He’s grown distant from his son (an uncredited [James Franco](#) [8]) and goes to a remote inn on the Outer Banks of North Carolina to unwind and meet up with someone important to his past and future.

Lane plays Adrienne, a devoted mother who has been separated from her husband ([Christopher Meloni](#) [4]) since he cheated on her but the cad now wants back into her life. It doesn’t help that Adrienne is facing pressure from their daughter (Mae Whitman) to reconcile but she finds support from her close friend ([Viola Davis](#) [14]), the owner of the inn.

Adrienne happens to be watching the inn when Paul happens to be the only guest there on a weekend where there happens to be a hurricane. There’s a lot of “happens” in “Nights in Rodanthe”. Just not a lot of believability.

The first part of “Rodanthe,” the courtship period between Adrienne and Paul, is surprisingly lifeless and inert. Without the natural chemistry these two stars have together, it would be nearly unbearable. They hang around the inn, eating, drinking, playing garbage-can basketball. Is this how people going through emotional upheaval really grow close to one another?

Of course, mother nature must step in and the hurricane forces Paul and Adrienne to turn to one another as they try to put the problems of their lives in perspective. The dialogue in the mid-section of “Nights in Rodanthe” is unbelievable.

“Not the best husband, the best father. The best doctor!”

“What are you afraid of?”

“Do you even remember who you really are any more?”





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Photo credit: Warner Bros.

These are the kind of cliched, manipulative lines that shouldn't make it past a rough draft much less to a shooting script. No one talks like that and once you realize that "Rodanthe" is just another melodramatic soap opera, it loses all interest or emotional power. Past the star's copious chemistry and like-ability, there's nothing to care about.

Warner Brothers knows that "Nights in Rodanthe" is a very likely rental, possibly even a purchase for fans of the couple or Nicholas Sparks, so they do a decent job with the Blu-Ray release. The video transfer is very good and the audio is above average. Even as the world around Paul and Adrienne is falling apart, the lush, beautiful setting of the Outer Banks looks stunning in HD. In fact, the video transfer is the best thing about the Blu-Ray release of "Nights in Rodanthe".

I expected a commentary or in-depth look at the making of the film, but neither are really present. There are a few EPK-style interview bits with Lane and Gere on the making-of feature called "The Nature of Love," which runs about twenty minutes, probably long enough for casual fans of the movie, but serious ones usually want a bit more than that.

"A Time for Love: Keeping Up with Nicholas Sparks" is for hardcore fans of the author only and "An Intimate Look at 'In Rodanthe' with Singer/Songwriter Emmylou Harris" is the same for those who adore the country star. The inclusion of Gavin Rossdale's "Love Remains the Same" may be the most unusual addition.

Finally, director George C. Wolfe appears on a director commentary on a handful of correctly deleted scenes. In one, he comments on the cut of a shot of a house going down the shore after the hurricane because of Katrina memories he feared it would raise. Wolfe, a theater veteran and household name in those circles, is an interesting creative voice and I wished he had done a commentary, even if it meant I had to sit through "Nights in Rodanthe" again.

'Nights in Rodanthe' is released by Warner Brothers Home Video and stars Richard Gere, Diane Lane, Scott Glenn, Christopher Meloni, Viola Davis, and James Franco. It was written by Ann Peacock and John Romano and directed by George C. Wolfe. It was released on February 10th, 2009.



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