

Review – On DVD/Blu-Ray: **If I Stay** (R.J. Cutler, 2014)



'Teen weepies' are so prevalent nowadays they have almost become a genre of their own. When the manic John Green fans screamed to the holy heavens at the release of *The Fault in Our Stars*, it was no longer enough to present teenagers with relationships tainted by simple quarrels; we needed something authentic and moving. Feasibility isn't exactly the strong point of R.J. Cutler's 'car crash' romance **If I Stay**, but it is devilishly easy to get lost in its dreamy ideas.

A talented young cellist finds herself on the brink of reaching a perfect life. Auditions for Julliard Music School and a boyfriend who oozes talent and enviable sex appeal; it all seems so insignificant when she finds herself the victim of a car crash, left to decide between family and the boy she loves.

Chloë Grace Moretz seems to have made a series of great role choices recently, and *If I Stay* is no exception to this. Its concept may be totally farfetched, and its execution rather disorganized, but nothing negative be said for Moretz's performance. She plays the character of Mia with authenticity that rivals performers a whole lot older than her. She's emotionally captivating; a charming presence in a film that otherwise, could be seen as a little drab. Her co-star, the British import Jamie Blackley does his best with a rather silly role; but their on screen presence as a couple is where the film shines greatest.

If I Stay manages to balance an adoration of music, grief and teenage lust on an equally serious if unstructured level. Only one is truly affecting. As soon as the turning point hits with

Mia's car crash, the film develops a thick skin of grief which acts as a layer of beautiful, emotive material for Moretz. That said, this skin is so thick that its almost impermeable. Although it has its touching moments, it doesn't punch you in the gut in the manner that it probably should. This could be down to its determination to jump through a timescale so short that its difficult to decipher one moment from another.

A beautiful lead performance and emotional gravitas do their best to stop *If I Stay* from becoming a sprawling teen love story. For the most part they succeed, but a lot of cliched dialogue and uninspired characters stop it from becoming an exemplary addition to a downtrodden genre.



If I Stay is released by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment on Monday 2 February 2015