

This Isn't Your Typical Coming-of-Age Film

What you need to know about queer love and loss in the breathtaking *Moonlight*.

By Chanel Parks



Chiron looks out of his high school windows, trying to avoid his merciless classmates after school.

30-Second Synopsis: A black, queer boy named Chiron grows up in rough parts of Miami with a lot stacked against him. His daily obstacles include a drug-addicted mother, cruel and relentless school bullies, and a complicated relationship with his peer, Kevin. The film is divided into three parts, providing a deep, nuanced look at Chiron's inner life as he grows from a child to a teen to an adult.

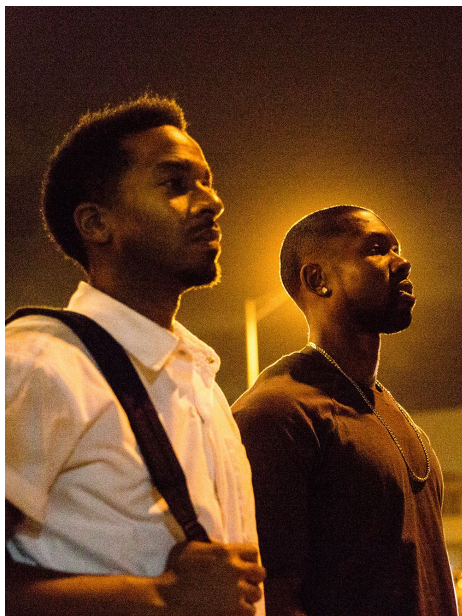
Most Powerful Symbol: Water is repeatedly referenced, as Chiron learns to swim and has beachside chats with Kevin. Water keeps Chiron afloat, and constantly threatens to drown him.

Realist Line: "I cry so much, sometimes I feel I'm gonna turn into drops," the teenage Chiron says on a beach at night.



A stunning view of Miami. The city is a scenic backdrop to this boy's tale.

The Best Date-Night Spot: One of the movie's most pivotal and subtly but intensely romantic scenes, between Chiron and Kevin, takes place in a diner. Diners have all the elements of a perfectly imperfect night: pancakes, jukeboxes, and questionable cleanliness.



Now adults, Chiron (right) and Kevin (left) face some unspoken tension.

Number of Times I Got Choked Up: 4.

Song You Should Queue Up on Spotify: The film's soundtrack is its own form of vivid storytelling, weaving in and out of crucial scenes. "One Step" by Aretha Franklin plays twice, once during a scene of a mother's rejection of her child and again when Chiron sees Kevin for the first time in a decade. The music becomes just as much a narrative tool as the writing.

Go See It If: You're looking for an extraordinary coming-of-age story told through complex human relationships and exquisite music, and you want to see a new approach to the messy nature of first love.

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***Moonlight* opens Friday, October 21. See more about the film on moonlight-movie.com.**