BUXTON Film

Sentimental Value [15]

2025 Norway/Germany/Denmark/others 133 mins

UK released	**26 December 2025**
Director	**Joachim Trier**
Screenplay	**Eskil Vogt; Joachim Trier**
Cinematography	**Kasper Tuxen**
Music	**Hania Rani**
Cast	**Renate Reinsve** (Nora); **Stellan Skarsgård** (Gustav); **Inga Ibsdotter Lilleaas** (Agnes); **Elle Fanning** (Rachel Kemp); **Anders Danielsen Lie** (Jakob)

An actress daughter and her director father explore their family roles in *Sentimental Value*, the sensitive sixth feature from Norway's director Joachim Trier. On its surface, the film may touch on the familiar theme of how artists draw from their own lives, but Renate Reinsve and Stellan Skarsgard bring incredible tenderness to a story that is ultimately about what children and parents never say to one another — and whether those lifelong silences can ever be broken.

Reinsve plays Nora Borg, a successful Oslo actress of stage and television, who is estranged from her father Gustav (Skarsgard), a once-prominent filmmaker who divorced Nora's mother when she was a child. On the heels of a French retrospective of his films, and the popularity of a recent documentary, Gustav has written a very personal film in which he wants Nora to star — even though he's hardly seen any of her work. Nora does not want Gustav back in her life and when she declines the part, he instead offers it to an eager American starlet, Rachel (Elle Fanning).

Collaborating again with frequent co-writer Eskil Vogt (now also a successful director), Trier fashions a nuanced look at both a troubled family and a dysfunctional film industry. (Gustav's comeback project will be distributed through Netflix, and the divisive streamer is the target of a couple of the screenplay's better barbs.) *Sentimental Value* uses Gustav's semi-autobiographical project as a window into the secrets of the Borg family, which also includes Nora's younger, more contented sister Agnes (Inga

Ibsdotter Lilleaas). Early on, we learn that Nora and Agnes' psychotherapist mother Sissel recently died and, because Gustav wants to make a film about his own mother, who committed suicide, Trier starts to peel back the history of depression that has haunted this family.

Much of *Sentimental Value* takes place in the Borg family's home, and an efficient flashback, framed as an essay Nora wrote as a girl, explains how they have lived in the house for generations. Now that Sissel is gone, Gustav decides to move back in — after all, it's in his name as they never finalised their divorce — and shoot his personal project there. That slightly fading family home becomes an apt metaphor for the weathered bond Nora, Agnes and Gustav share, although Reinsve's fragile performance articulates the festering resentment she feels toward her absent father.

In some ways, this is a trickier assignment for Reinsve than *The Worst Person In The World*, presenting the audience with an accomplished actress gripped by anxiety and melancholia. (Because of panic attacks, Nora has to be practically forced onto the stage after the curtain rises.) The character's rapport with Gustav is icy, and Reinsve hints at how Nora has never recovered from her parents' separation. Equal amounts of brash and reflective, Gustav sees in his daughter the same inexhaustible spark of an artist that he possesses, and Skarsgard teases out the poignancy of a 70-year-old filmmaker who realises this project may be his last best chance at cementing his creative legacy. Whether it can also repair his relationship with Nora is another matter.

Tim Grierson, *Screen Daily*, 21 May 2025 (abridged)

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