

'It Ends With Us' Ending Explained: Why Justin Baldoni Changed Ryle's Fate

The movie makes a key deviation from the ending of the book



Sony Pictures

**Andi Ortiz and Tess Patton**

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NOTE: Spoilers ahead for "It Ends With Us"

In any book-to-screen adaptation, changes are going to be made, and plot points are likely to get cut. That remains true for ["It Ends With Us,"](#) but the filmmakers opted for a pretty major change to the story's ending.

The new Sony film, adapted from Colleen Hoover's book of the same name and in theaters now, tells the story of Lily Bloom (Blake Lively), a florist who falls in love with neurosurgeon Ryle Kincaid (Baldoni). As their relationship develops, it quickly turns sinister as it becomes clear that Ryle is physically abusive.

Lily has spent her life determined not to end up in a relationship like this, because her mother was consistently abused by her father, yet chose to stay with him. It broke Lily in a lot of ways, and she confided in her high school sweetheart Atlas (played as a teen by Alex Neustaedter, and by Brandon Sklenar as an adult) about it all.

When Lily unexpectedly runs into Atlas as an adult, he recognizes the signs of abuse on her immediately, begging Lily to leave Ryle, and not be like her mother. Lily desperately wants to believe that Ryle is good though, and that the incidents of violence were truly accidents, so she stays.

Eventually though, she can't deny what's happening anymore after Ryle rapes her out of jealousy over Atlas. She immediately leaves and seeks out Atlas, who takes her to the hospital where they learn Lily got pregnant in the assault. She opts to keep the baby, even letting Ryle meet his daughter before she does ask for a divorce.

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This is where a key divergence comes in. In the book, Lily allows Ryle to be a part of her daughter's life, agreeing to co-parent with him. But in the movie, when Lily runs into Atlas again a few years later and he asks about Ryle, she notes that it's "just the two of us." In this version, Ryle is out of the picture completely.

And yes, director Justin Baldoni and screenwriter Christy Hall did consider not making that change at first.

"In the original draft, we had a scene in the epilogue where we see Ryle dropping off their child to Lily, and they have a short conversation," Baldoni told TheWrap. "It was written in a way that showed that they've overcome a lot over the last two years."

He continued, “And I wasn’t fully comfortable with it. And **No More** wasn’t fully comfortable with it, and we were trying to find a way to make it work, to honor the book, but too much had to be done in such a short window to explain how they could possibly be co-parenting.”

Baldoni and his team considered adding brief dialogue explaining that Ryle was in therapy, or another means of showing that he was actively putting in the work to better himself. But, as they prepared to shoot that version, Baldoni decided that the most appropriate ending for Ryle would be to cut him off entirely after he got to meet his baby girl Emerson — named for his brother — in the hospital.



Justin Baldoni stars in *IT ENDS WITH US*.

“I don’t want to open up a can of worms and have a conversation about, you know, should a man like Ryle be allowed to co-parent? You know, what’s an acceptable amount of work that that someone has to do in that situation?” Baldoni explained. “It was just way too much.”

The director also leaned on actual statistics to bolster that decision, knowing that reform is very rarely what actually happens.

“The truth is, from our research and from our partners, we know that the majority of men go back to being abusers, and that’s the fact,” he said. “And then it didn’t feel right to tell a story about a man who was a minority in that, because that wouldn’t be honoring the original intention of why we were trying to tell the story.”

He continued, “So the best ending for Ryle was to look at his wife and kid, and the life that he could have had, the life that he blew up, and to walk out the door and for us not see him again. And that was, for me, what felt the best in adapting the book and turning into a film is to say bye to him there.”

“It Ends With Us” is now in theaters everywhere.

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Andi Ortiz

Joining TheWrap in 2021, Andi has covered film, television, and all things niche since her arrival. Her heart lies in genre projects, like superheroes and fantasy, but she has also found a groove in covering late night television and, of all things, The View. Prior to joining TheWrap, Andi was an on-air radio personality and...

Tess Patton

Tess joined TheWrap as the company's first reporting fellow in 2024. Tess is from Birmingham, Alabama and attended the University of Southern California, graduating with degrees in theatre and journalism. She also served as the executive editor for Annenberg Media, closely overseeing coverage of campus protests amidst the Israel-Hamas War. Tess also has worked in...

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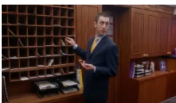
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