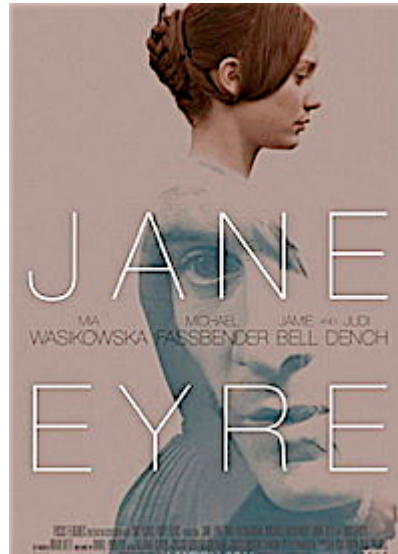




Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on March 27, 2011

## Jane Eyre: Classics are Classic for a Reason

The story of *Jane Eyre* is one of an English orphan who grows to young womanhood in the harsh environment of a charity school. When she leaves and takes a job as governess to the ward of a wealthy Englishman, Edward Rochester, master of Thornfield, she finds herself becoming emotionally involved with him, and he even proposes to her. But on the wedding day, the ceremony is stopped when it is announced that Rochester cannot marry because he is already married. Heartbroken, Eyre leaves the manor house, finding employment and nurture in the company and home of a minister and his two sisters. After a tragedy befalls Thornfield and its inhabitants, Jane returns to the manor house, looking for Rochester and for answers.



Brontë's novel is enduring because it is good. Part of the wonderful message of this story is that young Jane, orphaned and abused as a young child, then a teenager, never sees herself as a victim, but learns to overcome the circumstances and does so without sacrificing her dignity. She emerged from a tragic past with an unshakeable faith in God and with a high moral code. She holds her head high and lives with grace the role life has handed her.

Jane Eyre is played by Australian-born Mia Wasikowska, who deftly portrays the character, simultaneously depicting a responsible young woman making her way in the world, and a young girl discovering the difficult emotions that come with growing up. The character of Rochester is played by Michael Fassbender, who does an outstanding job presenting the jaded and brooding figure that Brontë created.

His is the morally weaker character. When Jane learns of his deception, she resists his pressures to stay with him anyway, and refuses to become his mistress, reinforcing to this reviewer the message that women civilize men and are often the keepers of morality. Whether or not this is politically correct, or even accurate, *Jane Eyre* presents a good role model for modern young women. The movie's theme of choosing what is right over what one wants is part of what has made the story weather the passage of time, and makes the film stand out among other theater choices.

An idea, shocking in its time, was developed by Brontë in giving Jane intelligence, independence, and individuality. The character is strong without being overbearing, truthful without being hurtful, and sincere without being weak. Before Jane agrees to marry Rochester, she pleads with Rochester to see her as an individual with needs and thoughts and feelings just as real as his, even though she is poor and obscure. Wasikowska is convincing in this endeavor and holds her own against the older Fassbender and his portrayal of the stronger Rochester.

And finally it is a love story, played out at it should be. Although it seems that the couple may never



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marry, Jane holds to her moral code, and in the end, finds Rochester again after the death of his wife. The movie ends without including the marriage and birth of a child that occurs in the book, but all the same, true love won.

The film is expertly crafted, and does justice to Brontë's work. The expert cinematography draws the viewer into the isolated nature of 19th-century English country life, and develops the characters in a way that causes empathy with them. The set design and costuming serve also to develop the story, and the casting couldn't be better, including the pleasant surprise of finding Dame Judi Dench portraying Rochester's housekeeper.

*Jane Eyre* was released only in select cities, so if yours is one of those, don't miss this jewel. It goes to show that captivating and interesting stories with morality themes take the cake every time.



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