

Anne Hathaway Steals Show in Slow, Stuffy ‘Becoming Jane’

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CHICAGO – “Becoming Jane” is slow, stuffy – as it should be in that time period – but beautifully acted and scripted. Anne Hathaway as pre-fame Jane Austen entirely steals the show.



Anne Hathaway in “Becoming Jane”
Photo courtesy of Miramax Films

In a time when women are essentially bred to marry men with money and act as lady like as they can until they do, Austen plays hard to get. She also bucks a major trend of the time with her independent thought and career aspirations.

Austen craves making a living as a female writer when a female’s job wasn’t to have a job. The film packs romance, love, authenticity and quality acting. You’ll enjoy it if you’re the artistic, romantic type who can be seated for 120 minutes without CGI or anything getting blown up.



Anne Hathaway and lover James McAvoy in “Becoming Jane”
Photo courtesy of Miramax Films

At my screening for the film, the female-dominant crowd leaked quiet squeaks during climatic highs and lows. Releasing such a picture today is a proud reminder of how far women have come since then in their pursuit for equality.

My concern with “Becoming Jane” is how much it flirts with falling victim to its own contradictions. Austen knows full well that money supercedes “affection” – most today call it “love” – when accepting a man for life.



Anne Hathaway in “Becoming Jane”

Photo courtesy of Miramax Films

However, her free-spirited ways are always trademarked by rebelliousness. Austen’s now-exalted novels (the film ends up around the time of her penning “Pride & Prejudice”) tell decidedly dark stories that grow even more dismal throughout only to end with all the happiness in the world.

The film, which opens limited on Aug. 3 and wide on Aug. 10, ends fittingly with her opposite reality: She never married.

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By [ADAM FENDELMAN](#) [9]
Editor-in-Chief
HollywoodChicago.com
adam@hollywoodchicago.com [8]

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