



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 6, 2011

Janie Jones: A Film Focused on a Father/Daughter Relationship

Rocker Ethan Brand (Alessandro Nivola) and his band are on their way to a successful comeback when Brand's former lover, Mary Ann (Elisabeth Shue) returns with a surprise: Brand's 13-year old daughter Janie Jones (Abigail Breslin). Janie's mother decides to leave for rehab in the hopes of kicking her drug addictions, forcing Brand to take his daughter along with him on his bus tour.

Ill-prepared for a daughter, Brand continues to maintain the same lifestyle he led before her arrival, forcing Janie to fend for herself in grimy bars and sketchy motels along the tour. In fact, Brand's lifestyle potentially threatens the future of his band, but he finds redemption in the most unlikely source: his daughter and her musical capabilities.

Brand's own bad behaviors is ostracizing himself from the rest of his bandmates, ultimately forcing him to finish the tour as a solo artist. Janie slowly becomes her father's only friend, and as their relationship grows, Brand discovers that his daughter has adopted many of his musical talents.

The film is a wonderful exploration of a man's journey from single bachelorhood to fatherhood, from the immaturity and decadence of a rocker's lifestyle to that of a more refined adult. Likewise, it highlights the musical journey of the young Janie, as her abilities advance.

Janie Jones is a film about second chances, and as such, is heartwarming and poignant. It achieves that purpose without cliché and utter corniness. It puts a sort of sharper edge on the typical strained parent/child relationship films, though like many others, it seems to simplify what should be a significantly more complicated process. Still, because this is an oft-seen genre of films, the movie is entirely predictable.

The chemistry between Breslin and Nivola is undeniable and truly showcases the performing abilities of both actors. However, it seems fair to say that Breslin stole the show. She has matured greatly since her debut performance in the film *Little Miss Sunshine*, though she has not lost her charisma from that film. She is truly convincing as a self-contained child who tries her hardest to make the best out of the unfair hand of cards she was dealt.

Likewise, the acting abilities of the supporting cast prove to be another asset to the film.

Despite the film's entertaining nature, because of the drug and alcohol abuse and some of the film's darker overtones, it is not suitable for younger audiences. For some, however, this aspect of the film is what makes it a bit more convincing.





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Rock 'n roll provides a significant backdrop for the film, as Janie was named for the song "Janie Jones" by The Clash, and music is often utilized in the film to effectively convey the mood. In fact, the soundtrack is yet another positive aspect of *Janie Jones*.

Overall, while *Janie Jones* is not exactly the kind of film one would write home about, it is engaging enough to be a consideration for this weekend's entertainment.



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