

Give me glasses, Hollywood

By Macie Calvert

Once upon a cliché high school movie: Girl is an unpopular high schooler, a nerd, quiet. She wears glasses. Boy is an attractive football player. How would Boy ever date her? Boy doesn't notice her. Until one day, Girl takes off her glasses to reveal that she's not plain — she's gorgeous! How could Boy have not seen it before? They fall in love and Girl never wears glasses again. The end.

Chances are, you didn't need to imagine it. You've seen that on the screen, one way or another. When Girl gets rid of her glasses, she becomes pretty. Girl becomes outgoing. Girl becomes cool. Girl becomes good enough for Boy. I mean, have you seen *The Princess Diaries* makeover scene?

We've seen this before. The dramatic removal of the repulsive glasses, and hallelujah! The person who had been wearing them is handsome, or pretty, or brave — they are *better* without their glasses.

Of course, that's not realistic. We all know that wearing glasses doesn't make you some kind of unholy nerd, that glasses do not automatically make you smarter. (Trust me. I have glasses.) No one gets called "four eyes" anymore. Glasses aren't even really associated with outright nerdism — yet, we look to the movies.

Perhaps the sidekick has glasses, that's great. But the sidekick isn't considered pretty; she's cool in a nerdy kind of way. She's okay. She's the smart one. The heroine is much prettier, of course. The heroine is the one we want to be, the one who saves the world. And the heroine doesn't wear glasses.

"I feel like in a lot of aspects if you have

glasses they're kind of your defining feature," sophomore Michelle Chen said. "It's something special about you in that sense. I don't know if it's good or bad."

I only really noticed these thoughts in high school, when I started wearing glasses every day. The revelation came to me the summer after my freshman year. *Why didn't I just get contacts?* The answer was crystal clear

not wear contacts. (Call me a wimp. I prefer my life of comfort.) Disappointed, I accepted that I would remain the glasses-wearing girl. Instead,

I got new frames with which I was happy. Do I wish I wore contacts?

Absolutely. I think I've always

thought that, when I'm older, I'll wear contacts. I'll wear them when I go to prom. I'll wear them on my wedding day. In pictures, where I

care how I look, I'll take my glasses off. I have a homecoming photo where I'm not wearing glasses. I can remember when the photographer almost snapped the picture, and I took off my glasses at the last second, deciding that I wanted to be remembered without them. I'm not the only one who feels that I'm supposed to be wearing contacts.

"All my friends are getting contacts," sophomore Amy Bone said. "They're like, 'You know I don't like how I look in my glasses, I think I look much better without them.' I've always liked my glasses, but maybe I should

get contacts because they all are? I think there's an expectation that you will want contacts by [high school]."

In a time where diversity is becoming more common, why are glasses still so far behind?



PHOTO BY ZIMBIO

As soon as Mia from *The Princess Diaries* removes her glasses, Mia's long-time crush, Josh, sees her as beautiful. This phenomenon showed consistencies throughout many movies and books

(because I was wearing my glasses), and I quickly began to envision myself without glasses, as some elevated Macie that would be gorgeous.

What can I say? I'm a dreamer; I went through the trouble of obtaining contacts to try. I won't describe the ordeal of trying to put two squishy, smooth, freezing cold disks of clear jello in my

eyes. If you're curious, stick an ice cube on your eyeball and you'll produce a similar effect. In the end, I came to the conclusion that I could

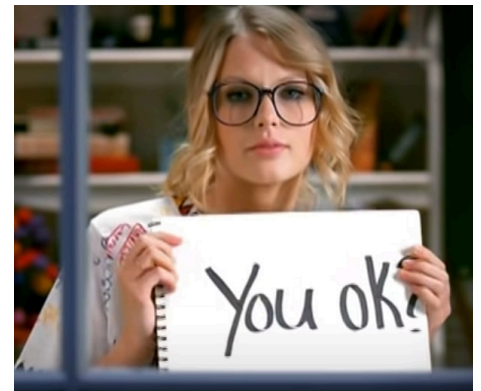


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VOICES AND NOISES



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The majority of people wear glasses in real life — about 64 percent, according to the Vision Council of America — and it's not being reflected.

Movies tell us that heroes do not wear glasses. If they do, they take them off when they're going to save the world. Indiana Jones is a cool scholar guy when he wears his glasses. But then, when he becomes the epic fedora-toting, whip-slinging hero, the glasses are gone. (Does Indy do all that stuff blind? Amazing.) Or watch the "You Belong With Me" music video (and probably a thousand others). You have Clark Kent/Superman, which is self-explanatory.

The major case against this is Harry Potter (again, why Harry Potter is the greatest series humankind has been blessed with, but now's not the time). Harry may be a little awkward in the books, but he's a hero. Girls like him. He's not ugly. "Glasses" aren't his personality. Harry wears glasses *the entire time*. He fights Voldemort wearing his glasses, he kills a basilisk wearing glasses — you get it. Harry didn't need to get rid of something normal, something he needed to see, to

battle the greatest villain of all time. He did it just fine wearing glasses. For that, I applaud you, J.K. Rowling.

In movies, glasses are the physical form of book-smart, scholarly character. Glasses are practically a personality trait. They can be cool, but not too cool. Pretty but not too pretty. The person who wears glasses in a movie can be cute in a nerdy type of way, but never knockout beautiful.

"The media tends to not help with the stereotypes around glasses, and I feel it's much more prominent in kid's shows," Bone said. "In *Scooby-Doo*, for example, Velma is the smart one with the glasses."

Let's not forget that people can wear glasses and still be attractive. Take me, for example. (Ha.) *It's not the glasses that make people ugly*. Pretty people can pull off anything — it's as simple as that. Including glasses. Have you *seen* Tom Holland's look

at the *Far From Home* premiere? Or Millie Bobby Brown, who has worn glasses multiple times and always looks cute. People can be attractive in glasses. Duh.

But Hollywood is fake, you say. Only pretty people get cast in movies.

Of course, movies are going to only cast attractive people. That's Hollywood. Apparently, Hollywood cannot slap a pair of glasses on one hero, one protagonist, one character considered pretty or heroic. Yet in real life, heroes wear glasses. Doctors, teachers, leaders and people we look up to — *they wear glasses*.

This brings me to Anna Cathcart. She's an

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- Anna Cathcart



PHOTO BY HOLLYWOOD LIFE

actress who plays the younger sister of the main character in the Netflix original movie, *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*. Cathcart is sixteen. Cathcart is pretty. Cathcart also wears glasses. I'm not just talking about wearing them for her role in movies. She wears glasses *all the time* — at premieres, on Instagram, everywhere.

"I don't necessarily look like everybody does on TV," Cathcart said in an interview with *Teen Vogue*. "There are not that many people in the industry that you do see wearing glasses or wearing braces who look like ordinary kids. I think it's super cool that I can show people you can be an ordinary girl and make it just as well in the industry."

In a time where diversity is becoming more common in movies, why are glasses still so far behind? Give me heroes with glasses. Heroes who don't take them off when they've got world-saving to do. Give me people who fight crime in glasses, who save lives in glasses, who slay the dragons and make the play and save the city.

Our real heroes wear glasses — so honor them.

Give me glasses, Hollywood.

Our real heroes wear glasses - so honor them.