

# [***'Barbie' movie brings a spiritual, almost scriptural quality***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKD-NB61-DYWP-8001-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

I watched the Oscars for one reason only - to see Ryan Gosling perform "I'm Just Ken."

I held no illusions that the Greta Gerwig movie "***Barbie***" would take home many (or any) statuettes - not even for Gosling as Best Supporting Actor. (I knew Robert Downey Jr. had it in the bag, the minute the theater house lights went up when I saw "Oppenheimer.")

Still, I was rooting for "***Barbie***," even though industry experts and pundits were pretty sure that the movie's Oscar fate would be much the same as that of two other movies that spotlighted the lives of women. Both "The Turning Point" (1977) and "The Color Purple" (1985) garnered multiple nominations, and won nothing.

At least "***Barbie***" wasn't totally skunked. "What Was I Made For?" won for Best Original Song - deservedly, for the plaintive Billie Eilish ballad captures the powerful existential themes that made "***Barbie***" a profound experience for numerous women, including me.

My brothers and male cousins didn't get it. They're good, decent men, but they've never lived as women, nor did they come of age rehearsing life with ***Barbie*** dolls, as I did.

Also not totally "getting it," I surmise, were the mob of 9-year-old girls who packed the theater for the $5.25 matinee.

For me, half of the "***Barbie***" experience was overhearing questions the kids whispered to their adult chaperons, about the movie's grown-up themes - beauty, self-loathing, self-acceptance, growth, aspiration, and the ways men and women interact. (Oh, that marvelous America Ferrera soliloquy! It captured women's cognitive dissonance of living in patriarchy.)

The tween mob probably thought "***Barbie***" is a kids' movie. In a way, it is - as long as those girls have wise and trustworthy adults who can help them sort out the issues raised in "***Barbie***," issues that are probably just now occurring to these kids as they begin to ask "Who am I?" and "Whose am I?"

I am not, by a long shot, the first to notice the spiritual, almost scriptural quality of the "***Barbie***" movie. A clergy member I know beat me to the observation that in "Barbieland," the Genesis Creation story happened in reverse. The ***Barbies*** were made first. The ***Barbies*** are the ones who matter. The Kens exist only in relation to the ***Barbies***, superfluous and not truly respected.

That's why I loved the way Gosling interpreted Ken. He, more than ***Barbie***, is truly transformed.

Ken comes to an understanding of "Who am I?" and "Whose am I?" that is instructive to Christians who have entered into Lenten reflection.

He acknowledges flaws. He owns up to gaps in his insight. He knows he's a work in progress, probably forever.

And yet Ken accepts himself, and the love of his creator, by donning a tie-dye shirt declaring, "I am Kenough."

His anthem, "I'm Just Ken," isn't just whining about his unrequited love for ***Barbie***. It's about newfound, healthy love for others and himself.

I'm not done with "***Barbie***." Jay gave me the DVD of the movie for Valentine's Day. I've already watched it five times; soon, I'll invite Jay to watch it with me.

And, in art therapy, I grabbed onto the theme of "***Barbie***" as I made a collage declaring, "I am Lynough."

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