

Jenna Miller

Mrs. Rutan

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A.P. Literature and Composition

### The Good V.S. The Bad

#### **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)**

##### **Cast:**

- Jack Nicholson as *Randle McMurphy*
- Louise Fletcher as *Nurse Ratched*
- Will Sampson as *Chief Bromden*
- Brad Dourif as *Billy Bibbit*
- Danny DeVito as *Martini*
- Sydney Lassick as *Cheswick*

##### **Director:**

- Milos Forman

##### **Fiction/ Drama**

**Rated R** for some violent scenes and images, partying, brief nudity, and language.

**133 Minutes**

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What's a movie without it's actors? Actors are the most important part of the movie next to dialogue; it can determine the quality of the movie due to the director's actor choice. If the actor is famously casted in comedies and then takes a shot at a serious drama, the audience may feel uncomfortable having a known comic play such a serious roll. Along with the genre each actor is known for playing in, how they act is important-- I know, duh, of course.

In the movie, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, directed by Milos Forman, Jack Nicholson plays as McMurphy, the protagonist and it seems he is fit for the part. McMurphy was an inmate at a work farm serving his sentence for convicted rape and decided to play the insanity card thinking: maybe it would be a little better being crazy and lazy than working. He thought life would be easier in the insanity ward-- and for a little bit, he was right. When he first stepped through the doors, his boisterous laugh echoed through the hallways, catching everyone's attention. He seemed the most *sane* patient, even when trying to act *insane*. His broad smile and loud, attention grabbing laugh made him the perfect fit to play as McMurphy. His laugh described in the book was "the first real laugh I've [Chief Bromden] heard in years" (Kesey, 12). Throughout the movie, and also the book, McMurphy's laugh is a sign of normality that he brings back to the ward full of straight faces, and I think Mr. Nicholson does a great job doing the part.

Another character choice that the director did a fantastic job choosing was the actor he chose to play as Chief Bromden. In the book, he is depicted as "big as a damn mountain" (Kesey, 323) and in the movie, he matches the description. Will Sampson fits perfectly in the role; his stature, physical features and even his calming voice-- when we finally hear it-- for the character to a T.

For a star rating, I would have to give this a 4.5 for sure. The characters fit so naturally into place of their characters and the movie, as a whole, flows so nicely. There are critics though that say the movie completely throws the book out the window, but I disagree. You can't compare them because they are both works of art on their own-- and plus, have you ever seen a movie completely identical to the book? I doubt it. Movies are simply an interpretation of the book and the movie "*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*", has such great actor choices that even though they may not match the book's description (like McMurphy having red hair), they seem like they belong there.

#### Works Cited

Kesey, Ken. *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest: A Novel*. New York: Viking, 1962. Print.
