

Downton Abbey: A New Era

Have we reached the end of the Abbey?

A review by Bailey Dustin

Nearly 12 years ago, in September of 2010, the *Downton Abbey* franchise came to life. Over the span of 12 years, the series would see renewals for multiple seasons and two movies. Over the years, the writers of the series mastered the craft of leading viewers from season to season (to movie), always wanting more. Although the release of the newest film, *Downton Abbey: A New Era*, suggests that the franchise may be coming to a close.

With quotes such as: "...if [audiences] want more and the cast wants to do more, then I'm sure we'll find a way of delivering more." From creators like Julian Fellowes, it's easy to see why this series gave viewers the sense that it would go on forever. Despite these assurances, the newest film has a certain air of finality about it that can't be shaken. By the time the credits rolled, *Downton Abbey: A New Era* had done something that had not been done before at the Abbey, it tied everything together. All of the beautiful- and tumultuous- love stories are sorted (including Lady Mary), lives are guaranteed whilst others come to a close, and the Abbey itself maintains its success.

Obviously some may point out that for the most part, *Downton Abbey* has never been anxiety-inducing, and the air of finality has always been there, but this seems different. Why? There is a list of reasons, but my favorite is that Thomas Barrow has finally found the acceptance and love he has sought since the very first episode. In addition, each sister has overcome trials that spanned the entire series. The prosperity of Sybil's little family is guaranteed, Edith returns to the typewriter with the total support of her husband, and Mary completely steps into her role as the lady of the house. In addition to the plot coming to a close, the set design is different from prior pieces of this franchise. Where there is usually darker lighting, this film is bright and well-lit. This seems to erase much of the mystery that we may have seen once before.

The *Downton Abbey* franchise will live on forever, but it seems that the beloved series has wound to a close. If you haven't seen it yet, gear up for a beautiful closing chapter to a 12-year story.
