

# Back To Baskerville

Ok... let's go back to the show I have been cast in. Just to remind everyone where I am. I have probably 95% of my lines memorized for *The Hound of the Baskervilles* **BUT (as most who know me well know)** line memorization is no where near enough for me. Acting is much more reaction to what is happening around you. As the caretaker of Baskerville Hall, it is Barrymore's responsibility to ensure that the riff-raff does not overtake the home which he has so lovingly overlooked for generations.

Tonight, we ran Act I two times. I was given a line which may or may not become mine. Poor Eliza has only one line the entire act, so I was asked to read it since it could very well be Barrymore's line as well. We'll see if Mrs. Barrymore would like to retain her line.

After my first moments onstage, [Stapleton](#) complimented me on my facial and physical characterization. "You have the butler role down very well."

I also have a very important bit prior to the finale of Act I. I seriously doubt that the bit I have done since the beginning will be the finished product. (Bloopers reel of the DVD?) It leaves the [director](#) shaking her head every rehearsal. "You are such a DORK!" I like to think of myself as eccentric. "Dork" is such a demeaning term.

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## It is done

Today was the day I prepared for all week. Audition day. The shortest audition ever, but that was to be expected- I suppose

if they do any sort of callbacks it will be for the individual show at its appointed time. You see, I auditioned for the entire season, making these auditions sort of a cattle call. I had three minutes to impress them and I hope I did. I sang from "Race you to the Top of the Morning" from The Secret Garden (see post from a couple of days ago to a link to a video of someone's performance of this song) and ended up doing a character monologue from my church drama from a couple of years ago- an absent-minded scientist named Dr. Quack. I think I did a pretty good job, but I won't know if I got a part in any show for a while I'm sure, maybe not until the time of the show. I should have asked- oh, well. I didn't make the best exit either, with a simple "take care" as I exited, though I did remember to thank them for hearing me. It is time to, as I read somewhere, set this audition aside and prepare for the next. Incidentally I did finally find a website that shows several community theatre groups unlike the one where I found out about these auditions which is 95% professional theatre. The site is [Green Room Online](#) and covers the greater Chicago area, including eastern Indiana. Note- the information on the main page is outdated, but the links at the top bring up pages with more current information

The biggest concern I had about this audition was the cold I naturally came down with a few days ago, but God was merciful and allowed me to be able to sing and do my monologue without trouble today. I started coughing again tonight, but I don't mind. Another concern earlier this week was that I have no piano, and no ability if I did to play the accompaniment. The last time I sang this song with accompaniment was when I auditioned for Les Mis some years back. The solution was to find software that could scan the music and become the accompaniment. After a few tries, I found Finale PrintMusic 2010 which works nicely despite a couple of annoying bugs. The demo was unlimited too, though expires after 30 days so it

can no longer save. No big deal for now. Maybe I will scan in some other songs while I can. Of course, you already know about the third concern- a monologue. I had also read that a monologue should be from an actual show, so that's where I started. I checked out a couple of books from the library including a book of Neil Simon monologues. Unfortunately comedic monologues to contrast with my choice of songs were few and far between. I did like one from California Suite, but it was over three minutes! I talked with a former professional actor at church last weekend and he assured me that an original monologue would actually be better to avoid comparison to other actors they have seen performing the role/monologue, so I chose one that he had written, and I performed already a couple of years before, the one described above. The plus side to that was I already had it mostly memorized since I performed it no less than a dozen or two times- it was the intro spoken every week, slightly modified.

So, as I already mentioned, it is over- all I can do is wait. The next big event for me now? Just look at my countdown timer- less than eight days to go as of this writing. ☐

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## Finding a way

I'm involved with another theatrical production, as I've stated earlier. I've only been to a few rehearsals, and I'm tired of it. I don't think it is the show, or the actors in the show. I have a good time when I am there, but before I get there and after I leave I experience a feeling numbness. I'm just tired of the whole thing. I really wish I would have stayed on my theater break. I don't want to study lines, learn

blocking or any of the other things needed for this show. I have other things I feel like doing instead.

I wonder how long this feeling will last. I need to learn how to say no. I need to focus on projects I am really interested in and ignore the ones that I have just a passing interest in.

Oh well, the show must go on, and I will soldier through.

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## You're doing what?

Well, I received an email last Friday. It was a request for my 'acting' ability. I have been on a self imposed hiatus from theater, so I didn't think I would be doing any sort of acting in the near future. I was wrong. I will be the understudy for one of the actors. He can't do all of the performances, so I will do the one he will miss. I'm just lucky it is a small role with very easy dialog. I get to be a love struck honeymooner. I've done that role once in real life, I think I can handle it. I played that role for 20 years.

This will be a little different. It is a dinner theater with audience participation. I'm looking forward to it. The audience will be sitting around and in the middle of our acting. Should be fun. The character I have doesn't have too much interaction with the audience, but I do have to be aware of where they are located during my various scenes.

I will have to get some information as to the cost of the performances. Should be interesting.

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# Oh Lord, It's Hard To Be Humble

Not really, because I am so **NOT PERFECT** in any (rather long every) way. I see by the old stat count that I have reached a total of 666 posts (I'll get off that with this one). The title... a friend recently posed an interesting question. Does acting make you more humble when it comes to things concerning the human condition: like ego? I like to think that I'm not a very ego-centered person, but does that in itself make me egocentric.

In my humble opinion to be successful in any role, you must first know who the character is beyond what you are given in the script. Where does he come from? What makes the person who he is? What was his life like before he takes his first step onto the stage? This is ultimately as important for the person who has a one-line (or no-line) cameo as it is for the actor playing the 300+ line lead role.

Of course, understanding does not always mean you must empathize with the character. That would be totally insane! I could never be a mean, curmudgeonly miser but I sure had a ball playing one on stage. And as much as I humbly hate to admit it, I could never be a sexist, Liswathistani visitor covering for news new owner America country.

I am now at the point at which I am ready to take on even more challenging parts. To be able to take on roles that really challenge me to step out of my zone and look at other elements of the human condition. Just as Abigail Breslin is now bringing her take of Helen Keller to the Broadway stage in [The Miracle Worker](#). Plus... still have fun doing it! The moment it is no longer fun is when I stop and I don't see that happening any too soon.

I think during my years as an amateur actor, I have come to see (not necessarily understand) more elements of the human condition than I had before. At least enough to want to continue to do so.

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## The end of a very long day

The day actually started some time after Midnight last night. Our director's gift cast party was held, and it was almost mandatory attendance. It was worth the trip, because our fearless leader had some wonderful things to say about the show. The party was long and entertaining, but I got to bed very late (early???) and we had one more show to do in the afternoon.

The final show went as well as can be expected when one of the actors calls in sick at the last minute. Before anyone jumps to a conclusion, it was a real illness and not just sick from the party last night (ok, it may have been the food, but nobody else got sick). We had to cut the one scene that the person was in. Unfortunately, I was also in that scene. Life is full of disappointments.

My youngest and her grandparents were in the audience and seemed to enjoy the show. It is always fun to perform for family. I also had numerous people, throughout the run of the show, ask me if I was really a minister, or was I going to take that up as a new calling. Sorry folks, I'm an actor, I only play a minister on stage. Again I heard that this was the best I've ever done. My nature tends to think that people can only remember the last few shows they've seen. Surely I've done better on other roles? Oh well, as long as they enjoyed the show.

Finally, I took my youngest back to college. Just got back home. Definitely the end of a very long day.

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## Maybe it is coming together

We have one more dress rehearsal tomorrow night. Tonight was the first night I really felt comfortable in my role. I had flashes of comfort in the past week or so, but tonight felt good. Few things that I would like to improve on, but that is a never ending quest.

I haven't written much about this show, partly because of how I was feeling about my character. Another point was an actor dropped out. The sickness and then death of someone close to him prevented him from doing the play. That situation did not help the feelings I was having.

Our director stepped in to take the role and had the part memorized in under a week. That made me feel bad, since I had my role for a month before that and I was still trying to get the lines down. It took me some time, but I eventually got there.

The of course there were the problems of getting the entire cast there on time and on the same day. That is three plays (that I have been involved with) in a row. What is happening. I remember more than one show that it was odd for a person to miss a rehearsal. Hmm.

Anyway, today's show fell together nicely. We lost a cast member or two because of their work schedules, but we were able to work around that. Tonight was funny and in some parts very touching.

So to put it in a very few words: We have a show. ☐

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## **An evening with lines**

Studying lines for tomorrow night's rehearsal. I have some fun parts and they are the smaller roles. The intoxicated Santa at the beginning of the play is going to be a lot of fun all on 3 lines. Another 3 lines, and being on stage with my 3rd daughter makes the role of Dr. 2 very fun. Another 3 lines for another small part and 3 more for my 4th small part. 12 lines all memorized.

Some lines were taken away and I was given the part of Kris Kringle's friend and Dr from the Maplewood home, Kris' home away from the North Pole. This should be fun.

Anyway back to the lines....

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## **I think we need a lawyer....**

Some trouble with casting the latest show I'm in. At one point in time all of the roles were cast and everything was going well. I'm not sure what happened but we lost one of our male actors and one of the females. We had volunteers to take up the missing female parts, but we still need one more male. I'm sure our director is at her wits end.

The male parts available would be an lawyer for the court room all in Act 2. If that part wasn't desired, the new male actor could play Mr. Macy and other assorted roles. We have about 4



weeks left for rehearsal, and are almost desperate for this. We have other actors with multiple roles, but because all of us are in the courtroom scenes, we can't take on this one additional role.

Hey, it is only about 40 lines. Anybody in the Williams County OH area want a chance to be on stage????

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## What part did I have?

Our rehearsals have started for the WCCT's production of "Miracle on 34th Street". I started with a few male roles, since they were small roles and would be easily played by 1 actor. I started out with 4 such roles. Then 3 others were added, with lines from one or two being combined with one of the new parts. Today I was moved to a different role and lost another. Such is the way of community theater.

I'm just happy I get to keep the role I wanted. And I am again on stage with one of my daughters...

We do have a great Santa Clause with a real beard. In my opinion, our Santa is one of the best actors on our little stage. It is a pleasure to work with him again. A few other actors that I've been on stage with are also in the cast. And we also have many new people on stage. I always like seeing new people on stage. They are the way our theater grows.

I'll have to add a countdown the the opening. It should be a fun show...