

Not just a book reader

Yes, I realize you may be getting tired of my Nook posts. But I am discovering new things about it all of the time.

The kind folks that do the programming for the Nook gave it a few updates recently. I don't really play the games, but I did find the web browser useful in scanning my email. Don't think I will use it to reply to email, but reading it was fine. That is not what I wanted to write about.

This summer Barnes and Noble is running a free e-book promotion. Go to a B-N store with your Nook or some other electronic gear with the free Nook reader installed, and you can get a free e-book. Since I was picking up my daughter in Fort Wayne, I stopped to get the free e-book. And then I noticed there was a coupon on my Nook. I could go up to the coffee bar and get a free 7-layer bar. Not knowing exactly what it was, I went over to find out. It was a chocolate/coconut desert bar. Very tasty. So in addition to more reading than I will ever be able to finish, I get desert with my nook. Who know what it will be next time I am in.

As far as the free book. I haven't read it yet, I was still reading the Friday Free Ebook. Someday maybe I will buy an ebook, but not yet. ☐

And of course while visiting a B-N store, you can read ebooks for free. They even tell me that your place is saved for the next time you go in.

And I also heard that more libraries are getting into e-book lending. I think I will have a full summer of reading ahead of me.

Good Riddance To Lost And Celebrating...

...the end of my desire to re-watch the run of the show on dvd. Here I thought the finale would be so ground-breaking, so explanatory, and so intriguing that it would make me want to re-watch the entire show again, just to see how it looked after it was pulled all together. But I was wrong. I don't want to watch it again, and they didn't pull it together. In fact, my feelings couldn't be further from what I had hoped – I want to forget that I was ever hooked on a show called Lost, and I want to forget that a show called Lost ever existed.

The tv show Lost premiered in 2004. The premise always seemed intriguing – a group of people survive a plane crash only to be faced with unforeseen mysterious challenges that await them on a mystical island. I meant to watch it during its inaugural season, but I had a new baby in 2004, and tv was not one of my top priorities. After Lost's first season ended, however, the water cooler buzz just became too intriguing for me to resist, so my husband and I began to catch ourselves up on the first season, thinking we could always drop the show if we didn't like it. But like millions of others, we were hooked – Lost was great. WAS. Somewhere along the line, the show **lost** (haha) quality and many viewers at the same time – I'm thinking this was around the time of the infamous Hollywood Writers' Guild strike of 2007-8. Many tv shows went on an indefinite hiatus at that time, some did not return, and some, like Lost, were never the same. Lost became famous for throwing out a ton of loose ends, new characters and questions each new episode – without ever offering answers or resolutions. Many viewers **lost** (ahem) the ability or desire to follow the show, and Lost **lost** (cough cough) much of its fan following. And that's when Darlton (the collective name of the show's production / writing team Carlton Cuse and Damon

Lindelof) announced an end date to Lost – all of our many questions and loose ends would be concluded at the end of the 2010 season. And my husband and I, like many other almost-lost Lost fans decided to stick around. After all, we reasoned, we had invested all this time already, why not a few more seasons, especially if we were going to get our answers? We were anxiously awaiting the finale tonight, but unlike the anticipation of true Lost fans, we were just excited that we could have our Tuesday nights back. Much of the buzz compared Lost to reading a good book – when you get near the end, you think, what am I going to do when this book is over? It's so good! I can certainly identify with the good book analogy, but I would not apply it to Lost – we were just happy it was ending. So I guess disappointing isn't really the word I would use to describe the finale. I was half-expecting no real answers, considering the original bait and switch, but I couldn't really believe that they could get away with such a thing. And I am disappointed that I wasted a whopping **four and a half hours** (count 'em) on this tonight!

The first 2 hours were a re-cap special, which was less helpful than I thought. The first half of it was the actors reflecting on the show and giving inside info about filming techniques, etc. I'm thinking, why would they show this before the final episode airs? It didn't make sense to me. Now I'm thinking it was just another way to grease the wheels of Lost fans to overwhelm their tiny minds and brainwash them into being happy with the craptastic finale. There were also these "Lost Transmissions" – letters from audience members incorporated into scenes of Lost. They used footage from old episodes of Lost to make it look like Lost characters are actually reading fans' letters – for example, a scene with computers had a fan's letter written on a computer screen and the characters reacting to the "letter". It was really stupid, and no, I'm not just upset that my letter wasn't chosen. I didn't care enough to write a letter, just as I don't care enough to stay up really late, pointing out every

one of the clues I found that the cast and crew of Lost KNEW their finale would be incredibly awful and disappointing.

So anyway, then the finale episode itself was TWO and a half hours, and NONE of the questions were answered. NONE. All of the “true lovers” were paired up, and that provided enough fluff to keep Lost fans preoccupied and happy with the end, or so the producers hoped. Not the case in this household. In fact, if you ask me, in many of the interviews with the actors, you can catch hidden statements that they were not happy with the ending and didn’t think the fans would be satisfied. In fact, Darleton themselves made a series of disclaimers during the re-cap special. I’m not going to waste more time on Lost by pointing everything out though. I stayed up until 11:30 to watch this garbage and another 30 minutes writing this, and that’s long enough. Goodbye Lost – and GOOD RIDDANCE!

Oh yeah, a quick list of the few of **many** Lost loose ends they failed to tie up, just off the top of my head there are plenty more:

The temple and the guy who was in charge of it.

Sayid and Claire changing, having something dark inside them.

Drug smuggling with the Mary statues on the small plane that crashed – a man named Echo and his brother appearing to Lost survivors – for example, Hurley in the mental hospital.

The Numbers

Walt

Walt’s Comic Books

Whidmore’s connection to the island

Polar Bears

Miles' father – Dharma guy on Dharma Initiative training videos

The whole show in general – the ending didn't make sense to me at all

And I have one last thing to say – the 10 seconds of the water-skiing squirrel on the news after Lost was more entertaining than the Lost finale. At least my night was redeemed – thank you, water-skiing squirrel!

*An addendum – it was too late last night for me to write about the extremely entertaining Jimmy Kimmel Lost special, so I'll just share the alternate Lost endings he had on his show – they are very funny and although meant as jokes, any one of them would have been better than the REAL series finale. Sigh.

I DID IT!

I set out to do something different and challenging. Judging from many of the surprising comments I received after each performance and how I felt about myself after each performance was exhilarating! Exhausting, yet exhilarating. *Miracles* is such a departure from the scene-stealing, character roles audiences have come to admire(?) about me. I could have done *OKLAHOMA!*. *Seussical* would have been pure fun. But nothing could have prepared me for the emotional roller coaster of my first three-person cast, lead actor role. It was so worth it in every way imaginable. I really think that the greatest part about it was the shock I gave so many audience members.

The synopsis of the story focuses on the teenage, institutionalized, autistic girl named Eve. Her teacher, Kate, wants to believe that Eve is a savant and “uses” the technique of [facilitated communication](#) in order to “convince” Tom that his daughter is in fact writing a book of poetry, is going to be on national TV, and will be an inspiration to millions. However, is there more to this than meets the eye?

Of course I’m biased, but I thought Tom was the most demanding character of the three. A middle aged hippie lawyer who lost his wife to cancer while attempting to raise his autistic daughter... in and out of a thousand specialists who questioned his ability to love and care for his daughter even feeling that he is being blamed personally for her condition. He turns his back on God and does not visit his daughter for two years until he receives a call from the school telling him that there had in fact been a “Miracle.” A really lost soul...a shell of a man... an emotional wreck.

Gone was the buzz that accompanies the comedic scene-stealing

character roles. But there were bits of humor sprinkled here and there. (“As the hair on your head recedes, the hairs in your nose start growing faster”). Battles with the teacher. Destruction of school equipment... boy did THAT feel good every night... thank goodness for Duct tape ☐ I did take a bit of artistic license by introducing a favorite bit of my childhood into the play.

Once again, I have **NO IDEA** who said that comedy was hard! One day, I would like to be cast in another **BIG** dramatic role. But for now... I need a good, light, fluffy musical or just a fun comedy full of character roles.

But, as I said this afternoon as I called the real star of the show to the stage at curtain call, Beth found this treasure and put it together. In January at the annual banquet for the Village Players, I knew I wanted to at least audition for the role. Hopefully, her passion for the piece showed through our performances which were not exactly sell-outs, but for a show like this... the message and the audience reaction to the message needs to come first. Another rewarding aspect... each audience had at least one person who had been touched by autism.

If You Say It Loud Enough, You’ll Always Sound Precocious

Yesterday, we had a double show with a party thrown in between the two. At the matinee, my mentor who just happens to be one of my two best friends was in the audience. While most of the people in attendance who know me are rather surprised by what

I do on stage in *Miracles*, Chris had no doubt at all. He and Lisa are **BEYOND** what I call the best! Words cannot describe how much they mean to me. After the afternoon show, Mary was throwing a cast party. I had to ask if I could bring my ardent supporters along. I was really happy when they told me that there had been some cancellations to justj and company's "sold out" dinner theatre.

While at Mary's, we all got to meet Beth's seven year old daughter... and believe me, Jordan let us know how old she is! She is so full of life, precious, and precocious. I, along with C & L, marveled at how much alike she and a certain newly turned six year old are! **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SAMMIE! LOVE YA, KIDDO!**

Last night's performance had a really appreciative audience as well. I think it is awesome how many people this show has touched and taught. All theatre cannot be light and fluff. But, I think it is time for the return of a fun, fluffy musical. If not light and fluffy, then a serio-musical. There ARE a few of those floating around, aren't there?!

Is He My WHAT?!

Opening night was GREAT! The audience was both receptive and appreciative of the drama. I think the storm only added to the mystique. We were warned in our pre-show pep talk to project more even with our microphones just in case we could not be heard over the elements. OH, BOY! I DO GET TO BE BIGGER AFTER ALL! I have to say we have improved 1000% since Monday night. My family, very dear friends, and past co-stars were in the audience. "Clarence" was especially enthusiastic in his praise. So many audience members were really surprised

by my very dramatic turn.

Speaking of family members... my brother (who is 4 years older than I) was asked if I was his father. Knowing the culprit, I was only mildly surprised by the tale. "Uncle Billy" is just a bit on the eccentric side. I've only been acquainted with him since being in *It's a Wonderful Life* way back in December. Of course, he was a "plant" for *You Have the Right to Remain Dead*. But, we had a good laugh.

After the show, we had a small after party with lots of good, fattening food. I did, however bring a fruit bowl. But man am I BEAT! I'm usually up for a late night cast party but this show... while *Miraculous*... is draining.

You still have three more chances to catch the *Miracles*. Tomorrow (2.30 and 7.30) and Sunday (2.30) at the Huber in Hicksville, Ohio.

Tonight... Tonight

And to think just earlier this week I was kicking and screaming. No longer. I am soooo excited about this show! And I know it is going to come across the stage over four performances! Why would I ever think that the stage would let me down? It hasn't yet. Have I ever let it down? I know we are going to do it justice for Beth who had been pushing to get this profound work on the stage ever since she read it. It is especially meaningful to her. If you want to know why Beth is so passionate about it, you will have to come and see [Miracles](#) for yourself this weekend at the Huber Opera House in Hicksville (that's OHIO, not NY).

Following last night's final dress rehearsal, our director

commented that we all need to be bigger... more dramatic. **WHAT?! I NEED TO BE BIGGER?** (Never before have I been told that). No, no, not you. I was referring more to the ladies. As we were hanging around the parking lot, I kept reminding Beth of her statement. **I WILL BE EVEN BIGGER!** My two co-stars, director, and producer all laughed and said... Please, don't! (Oh... come on.)

Curtain up! Light the lights!

You got nothing to hit but the heights!

We'll be swell. We'll be great.

I can tell. Just you wait.

That lucky star I talk about is due!

Honey, everything's coming up roses for me and for you!

More iPad thoughts

I was going to combine this with my last post on the iPad, but I thought that the initial thoughts could stay there without further editing.

Things I wanted to try, but couldn't.

1) I was wondering if you could play music while doing other things. There was no music on the iPad, and I don't have an itunes account, so I don't know.

2) New and different apps... See above. I guess if I really want to play with one, I need an itunes account. I don't really like that, but I guess it keeps the device safe from most viruses.

3) Needed to load an app to get to MLB.com stuff. No flash video on these devices. And the Tigers were winning. Listening

to the ball game on this would have been fun.

Things I liked

- 1) Quick responsive touch screen. Fairly easy to type on the screen. I did have to look at what I was typing. I haven't had to do that in years. That would set back my typing habits.
- 2) Screen was clear and very legible. I do like the instant enlarge and shrink feature of the touch screen.
- 3) Hey, I could use it in the dark... Could have been an e-book reader for me, but then...

Things I didn't like:

- 1) Fingerprints. Touch screens and finger prints go hand in hand. Really nice display messed up by finger prints.
- 2) No Flash. I can understand why Apple doesn't want it, but not everybody is ready for new web videos. No MLB.com
- 3) No, I would not buy this to be an e-reader. It does have a back-lit screen and after a while I noticed it was harder on my eyes.

How would I use one? Would I use one?

Well I was actually thinking of many ways that this could be used. The astronomy software just jumped out at me. With that I was thinking of how easy it would be to load this with the proper software and take things with me. It is easier to carry than a laptop so the portability is great. The screen is bigger than the iPod, iPhone and other devices of that type, so it is easier on this old guys eyes. The iPad is built for sharing things. Use it to take notes, load it with things you are working on. Take it over to a coworkers desk or a meeting room. For my job it would be extremely useful.

That being said, I don't need it. The iPad isn't jumping out

at me like the e-book readers did. I could walk into an electronics store and not have an urge to buy one. I would use one if it was given to me, and use it often, but I think there it stops.

Quick Post on an iPad

I am getting to borrow an iPad from work this evening. Very easy to use, but touch typing on a touch screen makes me look at my hands.

This one has a cool astronomy program that I will try out if it is clear tonight. I will have to be on the lookout for the new pad computers when they arrive on the market.

More later...

Look What They've Started...

If you're a fan of Wicked, stop reading because the following post might offend you, by no means am I pulling any punches. I had kind of a stressful day that I can't post about, and then I read this article, so that was the icing on the cake. Think I'll take out my frustrations on pop culture – things that don't really matter in real life.

I just read an offensive (to me) article detailing the no fewer than SIX Wizard of Oz spinoffs currently being developed in Hollywood. Luckily for the world and movie fans abound, most of them won't see the light of day, but unfortunately at

least one or even a few will make it through production and be released into mainstream society, poisoning the legacy of Baum's characters and the 1939 MGM cinematic masterpiece we true fans hold dear. Before you think I'm overreacting, read the synopses I included below. If you're still not offended, do a google image search to dredge up the action figures from the Twisted Oz series, but make sure your kids aren't in the room first. What is this world coming to?

I bring Wicked into this because I blame the franchise – once someone decided to write a book imagining their own version of Baum's characters, the door was blown wide open. Sure, there have been uncountable Wizard of Oz spinoffs. The Muppets had one, the Veggie Tales had one, and countless sitcoms from the last 7 decades had their shots at putting their main characters in versions of Munchkinland. But not until Wicked took off in popularity have people really started abusing the integrity of Baum's original characters and, more importantly to me, massacring the sweet and innocent 1939 MGM movie – my favorite movie for many reasons, the main one being how advanced in many ways it truly was for its day. Sure, 1985's debacle Return to Oz was no picnic, but did it really do any significant damage? Not really, it was never really liked nor taken seriously. I like to make this comparison: take another movie classic, say, Gone With The Wind. Now take an "author" (really just some who is literate enough to be able to put words together to make a story) and imagine them creating a "backstory" for the Civil War characters Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara. Let's make Rhett, oh, let's say he was an astronaut before he met Scarlett and let's make her an ER doctor – that's why she has trouble attaching to people; it's because she loses them in the ER. Doesn't make much sense, does it? Probably because Gone With the Wind is what it is – an epic story set during the 1800's when those professions did not exist as we know them today. Do you see my point? Wicked has the witches going to school and other ridiculous scenarios – I'm not going to falsely claim to be an

expert as I've never read the book nor seen the show. Perhaps if I saw the show, I would like it – everyone seems to rave about it, and the costumes are supposed to be amazing. Maybe so, but they should have left my favorite movie alone! They could have started from scratch, wrote their own stories with their own characters, and I would have been perfectly happy to check out Wicked the show. But they had to steal Baum's ideas and MGM's visions just to put a brand-name on a product to sell, and this my friends, is called "selling out".

And as a result, we might be faced with the following junk polluting our theaters in the future (taken from [this article](#) from moviefone):

• *'Surrender Dorothy'*

Who's behind it? Drew Barrymore's production company, Flower Films

What's it about? According to Pajiba, the latest version of the script, by Zach Helm ('Stranger Than Fiction') is an 'Enchanted'-like story that sees the Wicked Witch of the West still alive and threatening to take over our world as well as Oz. It's up to Dorothy's great-great-granddaughter to figure out how to use the ruby slippers to defeat her.

Status: Barrymore's been developing this project since way back in 1999, when she was still a fresh-faced ingenue who'd just played Cinderella in 'Ever After.' Today, Pajiba says, the 35-year-old is unlikely to star in it, but she would direct it as her follow-up to her directing debut in last year's 'Whip It.' Pajiba imagines she might cast 'Whip It' star Ellen Page, who would indeed make a fine Dorothy. Still, with 11 years having gone by, it doesn't seem like Barrymore's exactly in a hurry to get this off the ground.

• *'Oz the Great and Powerful'*

Who's behind it? Disney and 'Alice in Wonderland' producer Joe Roth

What's it about? The script by Mitchell Kapner ('The Whole Nine Yards') tells the backstory of how the wizard went from

earthbound carnival mountebank to becoming the fearsome and mysterious sorcerer of the Emerald City.

Status: Given the success of the Roth-produced 'Alice,' Disney is likely to fast-track this movie, which was formerly titled 'Brick' (as in "yellow"?), according to the Los Angeles Times. Now that the next James Bond movie has been postponed and his schedule freed up, Sam Mendes has been approached to direct and Robert Downey Jr. to star, reports FirstShowing. Neither has yet said yes.

• 'Oz'

Who's behind it? Temple Hill, the production company behind the 'Twilight' movies

What's it about? According to the Los Angeles Times, the script by Darren Lemke ('Shrek Forever After') is a faithful retelling of L. Frank Baum's first novel in the saga, 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.' Imagine the Judy Garland movie, but with more action and no music.

Status: Coming from the New Line division of Warner Bros., this has the potential to launch a vast franchise based on the 22 'Oz' books. Which is why it's the most likely of the three competing 'Oz' projects at Warners (see below) to see the light of day.

• 'The Twisted Land of Oz'

Who's behind it? Comic book gorehound and toymaker Todd McFarlane ('Spawn')

What's it about? Based on McFarlane's own decidedly R-rated 'Twisted Land of Oz' line of figurines, his Oz includes a Scarecrow who's torn apart by ravenous birds, a Tin Man who's a junkpile of Edward Scissorhands-like limbs, a flesh-eating Lion who's not at all cowardly, a Wizard who's a gas-mask-wearing mad scientist, a carnivorous creature dubbed Toto after it eats Dorothy's dog, and a nubile Dorothy who's bound and molested by depraved Munchkins.

Status: There was confusion in the trade press (including some strewn by McFarlane himself) between this project and

Josh Olson's, (see below) since both were pitched to production company Thunder Road, with an eye toward distribution by Warner Bros. Last we heard from McFarlane (via MTV), back in September, he was grumbling over Thunder Road's apparent decision to go with Olsen's more family-friendly script instead of his own. McFarlane also claimed at one point that Michael Bay was interested in directing, but we imagine he's a little too busy making movies based on another line of toys.

- 'Oz: Return to the Emerald City'

Who's behind it? Screenwriter Josh Olson ('A History of Violence')

What's it about? In a plot that sounds a lot like 'Surrender Dorothy,' a descendant of Dorothy Gale (this time, her granddaughter) living in contemporary America (she's a young associate at a top Chicago law firm) is called upon to defeat a new witch making trouble in Oz. Aiding the young woman are the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion that she's been hearing her grandmother talk about for years.

Status: Olsen has denied ever being affiliated with the McFarlane 'Oz,' telling MTV in January that the script he delivered to Thunder Road and Warner Bros. was based on his own original pitch. Dakota Fanning was rumored at one time to be up for the younger Dorothy, but that rumor proved false (makes sense, since Olsen's granddaughter character is an adult). Of course, both Olsen's and McFarlane's projects have to compete with Temple Hill's for Warners' favor.

- 'Wicked'

Who's behind it? Universal

What's it about? It's a film version of the Broadway smash about what Glinda the Good Witch and the Wicked Witch of the West were like when they were schoolmates, well before Dorothy showed up. (Think 'Mean Girls' with green face paint.) Winnie Holzman, who wrote the book for the musical, has also written the screenplay.

Status: Universal is a co-producer of the stage show and has owned the film rights since the play opened seven years ago. Despite an IMDB listing that cites a 2012 release date, there's been no sign of progress beyond script stage. No one has been cast, though let's hope this gets rolling before original stars (and recurring 'Glee' guest players) Kristin Chenoweth and Idina Menzel are too old to reprise their stage roles.

Creativity With Spam

If you're looking for recipes for that gross canned meat, you've come to the wrong place... This post is about the internet spam variety since the blogs here have been getting a ton of spam comments recently. I just mark them as spam and delete them, but some are so amusing that they deserve recognition.

Come on people. Some of these are so obviously written by someone who doesn't even speak English – am I really supposed to believe that they read my English blog and understood enough to appreciate it? Some are just general comments, and I'm not (that) stupid, so they're obviously such generic comments that they barely apply to the blog post for which they are written. Some just don't make sense at all as you'll see below; I've dug up the best 5... and I wonder how much spam I will get on this spam post?

– The following is a response I got to a post I wrote about local murders:

Me and my brother eat with a fork too, but that doesnt' change or mean anything, does it?

What?

– I received the following comment on a blog post I wrote about a man and his eagle:

Definitely trust that which you stated. Your explanation was certainly the easiest to recognise. I tell you, I usually get irked when folks discuss problems that they plainly have no idea about. You managed to hit the nail at the head and explained out everything without complication. Maybe, people usually takes a signal. Will likely return to obtain more. Thanks.

Mhmm...

– Here is a comment on a blog I wrote about everyday life:

Martin you beed to sort out the awful display after this weekend. Too many tired wasters.

Makes no sense whatsoever.

– Another one from the same everyday life post:

Intimately, the post is really the best on this precious topic. I concur with your conclusions and will eagerly look forward to your coming updates. Just saying thanks will not just be sufficient, for the exceptional lucidity in your writing. I will instantly grab your rss feed to stay abreast of any updates. Gratifying work and much success in your business endeavors!

Wonderful use of the English language there. Get a thesaurus for your birthday, didja?

– And finally, this one had Europe (or Australia as it turned out to be) written all over it – my first clue was the use of the word ‘keen’. One thing I’d like to know is, why are these spambots so enthusiastic about telling their brother?

Yes, I was very keen on that. So was my brother. He said he will check it out tomorrow. We will be back before you know it.

Great. Is that a threat or a promise?