

It's funny, being asked to recall the most memorable day of my life. It's hard to dig through the memories I've managed to recollect. Memories drift by so quickly. You don't know they're gone until they're missing from your files.

Even so, I'll be able to remember this particular day perpetually, for as long as my memory holds out. I'll always be able to remember the most memorable day of my life.

Let's set the stage.

Being almost a naturally born theater kid, it's as to be expected that receiving the cast list, or the role you're going to play in a production, might be an exciting and well awaited event. But the cast list wasn't the most memorable day, not by a long shot.

After my audition was good and done, all we could do was sit back and wait for the cast to roll in. When it finally came, I was excited as a little girl on Christmas morning. Being cast as the main character boosted my confidence, motivation, and anticipation.

This particular musical also had special meaning to me, marking my ten year anniversary for first setting foot on a stage.

Now, I'm sure your mind boggles with a few questions. What was the musical? What was the role?

As childish as it may seem, the play was *The Jungle Book*. I had performed in this play ten years prior, ready to star in it again. I was cast as Baloo, the bear, being second to no one.

As exciting as this was, it's not the most memorable day.

The most memorable day was closing night, or the last night of a performance.

The theater company I work with completes their musicals within the span of two weeks. So after these two weeks drew to a close, I found myself facing closing night. The last time I would perform as Baloo, the bear, my favorite role in ten years.

Tons of emotions boiled over that night, threatening to escape. Comfort, sorrow, eagerness, and despair, just to name a few.

All those feelings blew away the second I stepped out on stage, and I knew it was time to fall into the world of *The Jungle Book*.

This show went without a hitch. During shows prior, something has always gone wrong, be it a lousy costume error, a song miscalculation, or even a fumble onstage.

Not this time. The show couldn't have gone better, despite sweating in a bear costume measuring in at over one hundred degrees. Even suffering from something like that couldn't take away the beauty of the moment. The beauty of the show.

But even this isn't what made the day so significant, although I can't imagine myself forgetting this anytime soon.

The most memorable moment of the day was during the last scene, right before we broke out in another jazzy song with cheesy dancing.

The girl to my left said her final line, cuing my next few words. Before speaking my final phrase, I caught the glance of the girl to my right, playing another lead.

Our eyes met, and time stopped.

I thought humans couldn't have superpowers, but right at that moment, we could read each other's minds.

I felt sadness radiating off of her, more powerful than the stench of someone who hadn't showered in three weeks. I found myself empathizing with her sadness. This was our last time being in this show. Our last time performing as our leads. We would be able to do it, one more time.

One last time.

And right after, all I could hear was the applause ringing in the hands of the audience.

That gaze might not have meant a lot to other people, but to me it was vital in understanding how we overcome sorrow.

The sorrow I feel about a show drawing its final curtain versus someone suffering a loss is dwarfed. Still, I've never felt sorrow like this anywhere else; I've never felt such deep despair in any other situation.

But sorrow wasn't the only thing I saw in her eyes.

I saw pure joy. Unalloyed, beautiful jubilation. At that moment, I realized there's a type of happiness, a type of satisfaction you get from completing a

show, that you can't get anywhere else. A satisfaction so filling, it could feed the whole world four times over.

That's why that moment meant so much to me. That's why that moment forever changed how I view acting, and feelings within me, and my peers.

And I always think about that moment, even now, even after that musical is complete. Thanks to that moment, I'm able to see the good and bad, I'm able to see why it's worth it.

And I see this moment every time I hear the sound of applause.