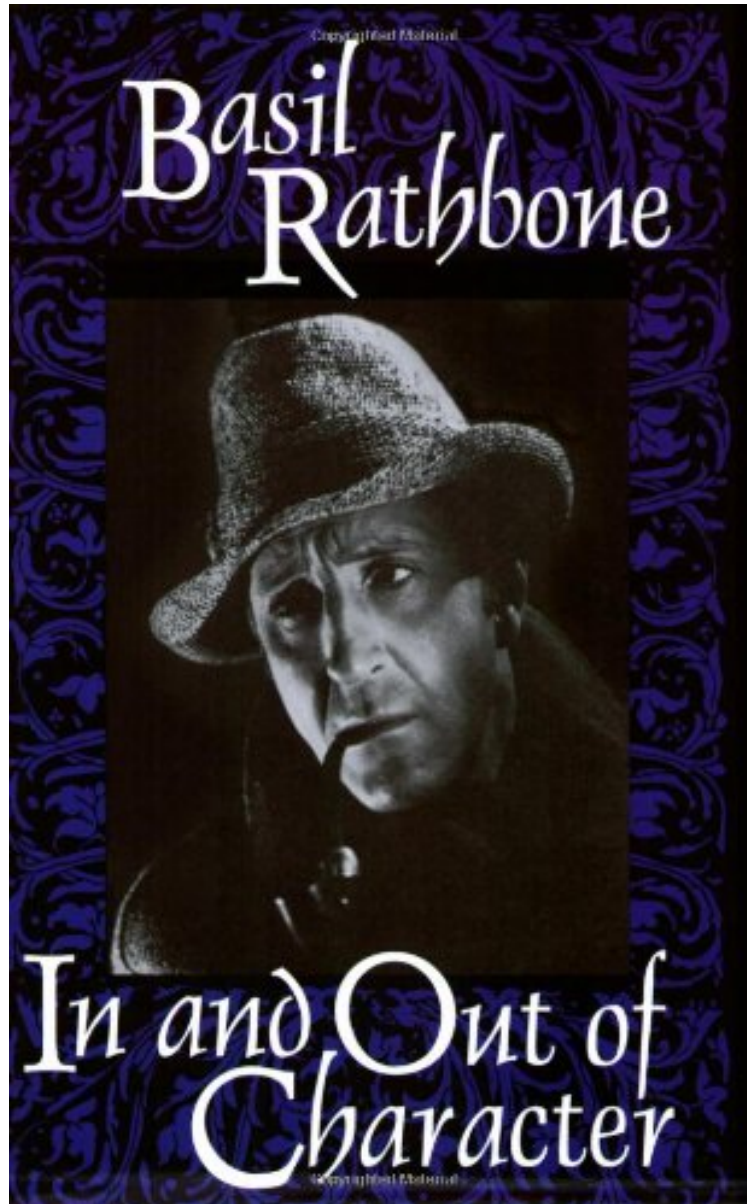


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In and Out of Character

Basil Rathbone

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Basil Rathbone : In and Out of Character before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In and Out of Character:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. "In and Out of Character" By John P. Morris It is a treasure to have "In and out of Character" back in print. My own original copy has long been lost and for decades I have been citing

from memory as many or as few cogent phrases of Rathbone's as I could call to mind. If one is hoping for something along the lines of a contemporary autobiography, churned-out by a self-indulgent opportunist for consumers with an appetite for a banal and tawdry tell-all, save your money. Wisdom, pathos, high-humor and invaluable incidents may be gleaned from every page. One familiar with Basil Rathbone may recognize in his written word the signature briskness, clipped speech and rapid patter that was his hallmark. And for any who value history - in particular of the arts and artists, Sir Basil turns over many stones and restores to memory a wealth of names so long forgotten. Rathbone's biography immediately takes hold of the reader and sweeps him along as if lifted on a majestic and careering cloud. One is moved to pity and excited to laughter, as the whim of the writer dictates. Writing proved as gripping a tool for Mr. Rathbone as had his performances on the stage, screen, radio, and vocal recitations. Our present time is sorely lacking such erudition, taste, and capacity of pure expression. Sir Basil more than delights and informs; he restores to the reader a free-flowing elegance and purity of language which came so naturally to him. Even the few words penned by his daughter Cynthia (who must have been about fifteen years of age at the time) on the subject of despair are evocative of the Church Doctors. If one is disposed to sensitivity, intelligence and decency, and if one delights in wonderful anecdotes of the famed and the unheralded, one will adore this book and never tire of returning to it again and again.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Uneven writing but a worthwhile story all the same

By S. Wells-Mongioli Unlike most of the other reviewers, I found Mr. Rathbone's writing style very uneven. When he has a real story to tell, he can be very good; at other times it appears he was summarizing facts and events from his life just to fill out the book. He had a fascinating life, with some tragic episodes, and managed to turn them into humbling opportunities for personal growth. He mentions his daughter Cynthia frequently, just not as much as his second wife Ouida. He forgoes talking about his first wife much, because it was not a good match and it was a painful experience with apparently a good deal of blame on both sides. I cannot guess why he doesn't talk about Rodion; one should not judge about that since we don't know, for instance, whether his son might have specifically asked not to be mentioned. I'm also pleased that he did not succumb to the temptation to make this a scathing tell-all memoir. That alone speaks volumes about his character, which I have gathered was kind, forgiving, conscientious, generous of judgment, introspective, sensitive, and also discreet. He also has some rather obvious biases that would not sit well with modern sensibilities. He was very much a man of his time, and very, very English.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Basil Rathbone...in and out of character

By MikeB2067 This book had a lot of positives and a few negatives...on the positive side, you really get a very personal feel for who Basil Rathbone really was, a man who lived by high morals and principals and had a very successful private life yet it seems and unfulfilled professional life. I particularly brought this book on the basis of his portrayal of Sherlock Holmes with Nigel Bruce and I was saddened to read about his disregard for the character and the movies, which although truthful and unemotional left me feeling somewhat disappointed. The writing style though is articulate and engaging, it sometimes slips into the banal but never long enough for you to lose confidence in the book. One of the overwhelming achievements of the book is to recapture very vividly the times of 1930s-40s Hollywood, which I personally loved. At the end of the book you really do feel as though Basil Rathbone was a fine chap and that's how I came into the book...thinking what a fine chap...to that end the result was a fitting testament.

(Limelight). "Basil Rathbone's book about himself...is better written than most books by or about actors and is more intellectually vigorous...Sherlock Holmes fans will be much interested in his remarks on the character with whom he has been so closely identified." Library Journal "Quite naturally full of memories, full of names, full of glimpses of stars of stage and screen of yesterday and today." New York Times Book Review