

Interview With Actor Dylan Kingwell, “Campfire Kiss”

By Ruth on 25 March 2017

There is not much better than a new Hallmark Channel film, and *Campfire Kiss* is definitely a new favorite of mine. Interestingly enough, I had interviewed most of the principal actors with one exception—who was Dylan Kingwell? As I was reviewing his credits, I immediately remembered his role of Victor in *The Returned*, but Hallmark audiences have certainly seen him in two other films (both Christmas films as a matter of fact). Although the premiere of *Campfire Kiss* was last weekend (March 19th), I know that Hallmark is replaying the movie multiple times, and I even heard it may be making its way up to Canada next weekend. In order to get to know the young man who plays Arthur in this recent heart-warming film, I had the opportunity to chat with this young thespian, who has more roles under his belt than some of his adult counterparts!



RH: Dylan, I'm so glad it worked out for us to chat today. Last weekend was the premiere of your movie *Campfire Kiss*.

DK: Yes, I loved getting to tweet with my fans. Such a wonderful time.

It was a great movie for sure. So, Dylan, how old are you now?

I am twelve years old, turning thirteen in July.

You are younger than I thought you were. For some reason, I thought you were older than that. I think because you've had such a long career.

Yeah, almost nine years now. It's been almost all my life.

So have you done other interviews?

Yeah, I've done a couple of Skype interviews—one during the time I was on *Supernatural* and one during the time I was on *The Returned*. And I've done some phone interviews for newspapers.

Oh, good, that's why you seem like such a pro at interviewing. I can already tell that.

Thanks.

Dylan, how did you end up becoming an actor now that you've done this for so long?

Well, I started when I was around three. I was a really social kid. My mom would take me to Starbucks, and I would actually go around and talk to people. I would go, "Hi, my name is Dylan," to people I didn't even know. At the time, my mom and dad thought it would be a fun thing for me to do. So we sent out a letter to a few agencies, asking for representation, and we went into see a few different people. One of the agents we went to—I impressed her by reciting a book that my mom

had been reading to me. It was a children's picture book, and I didn't know how to read, but she always read it to me, so I remembered it. As a result of that, my agent signed me, and I started doing commercials almost right away.

Wow! And you were really only three when you were doing this?

Yes, that was when I got my agent, Lisa, yes.

I am thinking, I have a daughter who at the age of three would not have been doing that. I think it's really cool when kids start that young. Well, good for you and for your parents, and for your agent too! Thanks for sharing that amazing story.

Yeah, no problem. They just thought it would be the right thing for me.

What was the first thing you booked?

Two weeks in actually, I auditioned for a commercial for Hasboro for Candy Land Castle, and I ended up booking it. And that was my first commercial. I was three, turning four, when I signed with my agent, and this commercial filmed when I was four.

So when did you book your first TV/film role?

I did a role in a Tim Burton movie *{Big Eyes}*. It was a short appearance, but it was really cool. It was sort of my first taste of the movie industry. Commercials are like eight hours and then you're done. But with the movie, it was a different atmosphere, but it was really cool, and I liked it. And then when I was nine, I booked the regular role in *The Returned*. It was four months of filming on that show, and I made friends with the cast and crew. In fact, it was like one big family. I said to my mom and my agent, "I want to do more of this." I didn't stop commercials. The last commercial I did was a year or two ago. But now I mostly audition for film and TV.

The Returned was probably when I first realized who you were. I was watching that show because I had a friend who had a guest spot on two episodes kind of towards the end of the season. I remember that your character, Victor, for me was one of the reasons I enjoyed the show, and I'm not just saying that because I'm talking to you. There were some parts of the show that weren't as important to me, but there was something about your character and the way you portrayed him that made me want to tune in every week. I wanted to see what Victor was going to do next.

Thank you. That's very nice of you.

So how did you get that role on The Returned? Was it just a normal audition?

It was anything but a normal audition! There were actually four sessions over the span of a month. On May 9th, I went in for the initial audition, and that went really well. Then casting asked me to come in for a practice session because I guess that maybe they weren't getting out of me what they wanted or what they needed. So I went in, and they were impressed. When I went to the callback, which was by then the third session, it was at that point, I think, that they started to consider me for the role.

Then I went to a director/producer session as my fourth session, and here is the really interesting story. Prior to that session, I was at the supermarket with my dad, and they had samples of Brie cheese—I know this sounds really irrelevant, but it will make sense later. I was like, "Oh, I've never tried Brie cheese before." So I tried it, and I loved it. Fast forward thirty minutes to I'm walking in the room... and one of the scenes I have to do for the audition actually involved cheese. And some of it was Brie cheese. Carlton Cuse, the executive producer, said to me, "Do you actually want to eat something for this? It doesn't matter if you do or don't." And I was like, "Is that Brie cheese?" And he was like, "Oh yeah." And I was like, "Oh, I just tried that for my first time a half hour ago." And he was like, "Wow!" So the first time I met the executive producer of *The Returned*, we talked about Brie cheese. {laughs} But it was awesome, and I think the session went well. And a week later, we got the email that I had booked it. I don't know if the cheese helped it or not, but I would say that had I not tasted the cheese, I wouldn't have bonded with the executive producer like I did. Though it was a really long, drawn-out process, it was worth it.

How did you go about getting into character for this role of Victor? You were only nine when you booked this role, and had you not brought the depth to that character that you did, I don't think the show would have worked as well. At least, in my opinion.

Well, it was a big challenge for me, I think. I had never done anything that huge before. But I've always liked challenges. I took any and all direction I could get. Before filming, I tried to watch as much of the French version of *The Returned* as I could. I took little notes from everywhere. I knew going into it that it was going to be a challenge, but I did it the way I thought it would be done, and the directors and producers gave me feedback, and I applied that to the way I thought it should be done. It's the same with every role. You're not going to know exactly how to do it until you do it a few times. By mid-season, I was good at it. I could get right into character just like that, but at the beginning, I had to think about it.

You know, what you're telling me is what I normally hear from adults; I don't usually hear that from kids your age. I don't usually hear that level of maturity, so that's really cool. You are definitely ahead of the game.

Thank you.

Before we transition to your Hallmark works, I know you did book a role on Supernatural. What can you tell us about your role and time on that show?

It was on one episode, and in terms of the show and other roles, it was a small role. It was a few scenes, but it was signifi-

cant for me because to be a part of that show and that production that had been going on for eleven years at that time.. it was such an amazing fanbase, and I got so much support after it. I learned a lot in that one day I was on set, and I met a lot of new people. I gained a substantial *Supernatural* following, and they were all really supportive of my work. I will be forever thankful that I booked that.

That is so cool to hear. I think almost everybody that I've interviewed in Vancouver has been on *Supernatural* at least once.

When a show goes on that many seasons, there's a lot of people that are going to be in it.

Moving along to your Hallmark works, I'm not sure which Hallmark film was your first because you had two Christmas movies for them out the same year.

I believe I filmed *Ice Sculpture Christmas* first. Then I filmed a Christmas movie for Lifetime called *Wish Upon a Christmas*. After that one, I did *The Christmas Note*. So I did three Hallmark/Lifetime movies that summer. It was a pretty busy summer for me.

With *Ice Sculpture Christmas*, I know that was a small role, but that would have been the first time that Hallmark audiences would have seen you. Was this a normal audition for Hallmark?

Yeah, it was a normal audition. It wasn't long and drawn-out like *The Returned*. It was audition, callback, and then I booked it.

You played the younger version of the male lead. I interviewed Milli Wilkinson, who played opposite you in that scene. While this was a short role, it began the whole movie and was significant. Did you get a chance to meet any of the cast members?

I made a good friend in Milli. I do see her around at auditions still. I did meet some of the cast, I believe.

Hallmark audiences often like to watch the Lifetime Christmas movies as well, so they may have seen you in *Wish Upon a Christmas*. What can you tell us about your role in that film?

In that film, I was considered one of the leads. It was a pretty significant role. Interestingly enough, *Wish Upon a Christmas* had the same director as *The Christmas Note*. I think that may have helped me in securing my role in *The Christmas Note*. Terry Ingram was so great to work with. I was so glad I got to work with him twice in one summer.

With *The Christmas Note*, that was definitely a much larger role than *Ice Sculpture Christmas*. And that one was a really neat story.

Yeah, it was so awesome.

Before we get to *Campfire Kiss*, I notice you have been in a couple episodes of *A Series of Unfortunate Events*.

Yeah, and season two was just announced. Production for season two starts April 17th. I will again be portraying Duncan and Quigley Quagmire.

Well, that's good to know. Something to look forward to. I know there are some Hallmark people in that. Loretta Walsh is in it, so some Hallmark viewers will want to watch it. And this is on Netflix, correct?

Yes, it is a Netflix original series. A lot of people have been in the series because each episode has a new Baudelaire relative, so there are a lot of people involved with the show.

With *Campfire Kiss*, we've been hearing about this for awhile. I got to interview Paul Greene. I've actually interviewed him twice in the last year. He is a great guy.

He is awesome!

And then I interviewed Ali Skovbye. I've actually interviewed her twice in the past year as well.

Ali is awesome as well. She's like the best.

And I've interviewed Barbara Niven too—it's been a few months.

Oh nice! You've got it! You're on fire!

What can you tell us about your character without giving away the storyline?

Danica McKellar plays my mother in this movie. My character, Arthur, is a preteen. He's a little angry and sorta moody about how he has to go on this trip with his mom, and he's kinda like, "This is lame." But it gets better and he realizes that maybe it's not that bad. Maybe he should give it a try. The development of his character throughout is pretty cool as he makes a new friend and bonds with his mother, his friend, and her dad.

What was the filming experience like with this cast and crew?

Oh, where do I even start? It was so good. I don't know how else to define it. I was friends with everyone on that set, and that's not just cast. That's directors, producers, writers, lighting, grips... like I knew everyone. I talked to everyone. It was such an amazing atmosphere. It was so much fun, and the cast was so nice. I learned so much from Danica and Paul and Ali and the director James {Head}. It was such an amazing experience, and I'm so glad I got to be involved in this production!

If I remember right, was it really cold when you guys were filming this?

Oh—that might have been the only bad part of shooting. It was... wow! It was cold. The first day in particular I remember. Maybe it's just because we weren't used to it. But I'm pretty sure it was the coldest day. I was filming a scene in which I was in a car, and the temperature outside according to the thermometer in the car was -11 {degrees Celsius}. We were up high in the mountains and the forests, and it was really cold. It got warmer as filming went on, so we managed it. And there was always hot chocolate. We lived and got through it, and we had a ton of fun. There really wasn't anything bad about going through the production. The first three days, there was a big pile of snow on the ground. It was winter.

I remember someone tweeting about it, and I felt bad for you guys. I know you got through it, but—

Vancouver had an insanely cold winter this year. We hardly ever get snow. Last year, we got half an hour of snow. This year, we had two feet of snow in December. Then in January, it kept snowing. And by March 1st, we still had snow on the ground. I'm hoping it will stay away now. I'm kind of done with winter. It was really weird, but it was awesome.

In addition to all these works you've talked about, is there anything else upcoming you can mention?

No, with the exception of *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, that's all I have currently. I've been to auditions in the last week. Obviously, anything I book will go up on social media once it is allowed.

I did notice you were in a Lifetime movie that first aired last month called *Manny Dearest* {originally called *A Stranger With My Kids*}.

Yes, I did that one last spring, I think.

The nice thing about Lifetime films is that they often repeat, so we can keep an eye out for it.

Absolutely.

Now, you go to regular school, isn't that right?

Yes, I go to a public school.

Has it been a challenge to keep up with your schoolwork when filming? Of course, it may not have been because you've been doing this most of your life.

You know, it sounds funny because I have such a busy schedule between school and acting and hockey and everything, but everything just seems to work out for me. I don't exactly know how. Hockey games are on the weekends, and practices are like at the crack of dawn, so you don't miss anything there. With acting, I missed three weeks of school with *Campfire Kiss* in January, but I have a tutor on set. I was only getting three hours of school a day. I started acting before I even went to school, but this has always been part of the deal with my parents that school is obviously more important than anything including sports and acting. As long as I maintain my grades and I am finishing everything and I'm getting high marks, then I can just keep doing what I love to do. And that's why it's really important to me 'cause I can only do acting if I'm doing well in school. I'm really lucky to have a good tutor, especially this last time, Tracy—she was so good with me. I loved working with her, and she helped me finish everything. So when I came back to school after the three weeks, I was actually ahead of my class in the work we were doing.

I've also been fortunate that a lot of the things I've done have filmed in the summer. Like *A Series of Unfortunate Events*—the days that I did film last year were all in August. No school missed there. *The Returned* filmed from like three days after school ended to October. I missed a month-ish of school, but September, hardly anything is done. So I've been lucky, but at the same time, I put in a lot of hard work. As long as I keep doing what I'm doing and keep working hard at everything, then I'll be able to keep doing everything.

It sounds like your parents are extremely supportive of you.

Yeah, they sure are.

They've established the standards, and I would tend to think that since you've done it most of your life, it might have been easier for you. Sometimes young actors who come in a bit later may have a more challenging time of adjustment, but you've definitely got it taken care of. {pause} So you mentioned hockey.

I've been playing hockey almost as long as I've been acting. I've been playing since I was four.

Is there anything else you like to do when you're not acting?

Well, I like to do a lot of things. I play video games. I watch TV. I love reading. My favorite book series of all-time is *Harry Potter*. I'm sure you've never heard that before. {laughs} I've recently started getting into comics. I started watching the CW show *The Flash*. I recently picked up some comics from the 1950's and 1960's featuring *The Flash*, so I'm really excited about that.



From Campfire Kiss

Dylan is one of those young men who absolutely dumbfounds me with the level of maturity he brings to every role he portrays. Notwithstanding, it only takes a moment in Dylan's presence to ascertain the fact that Dylan is first and foremost a kind, gracious human being who merely wants the opportunity to do what he loves and accomplish his goals and dreams by following the passion that drives his soul and heart—acting. He has labored over the last nine years to enjoy the success he is now attaining, and I am thoroughly convinced that he has only begun to scratch the surface of the depth of his capabilities. Although he is busier than the preponderance of youths I meet in my daily life, he is enthusiastic and resounding with an overabundance of energy that is not always seen from adolescents his own age, who are merely subsisting through these formative years. I am immensely grateful to his parents for establishing and enforcing the standards they set up at the beginning of this career undertaking, and I don't truly sense that rebellion against what has been the determined norm in his world is an option for now and hopefully not any time in the future. I would venture to say that if Dylan maintains his humble and benevolent demeanor in addition to his professionalism and outgoing personality, he will continue on this path as his career steadily continues to rise to levels that are practically unfathomable at this point in his life. If you have not seen his most recent role in *Campfire Kiss* on the Hallmark Channel, I would invite you to check local listings for the next time it will be replayed. Or perchance if you reside in Canada, I would check out whether it is playing on the W Network next weekend—I understand it may air on April 2nd! Additionally, I would request that all my readers check out Dylan's links below and follow him via social media. If there is one young man who appreciates his fans, it is Dylan, and we only want him to ultimately succeed in his chosen profession! Supporting his work and continuing to encourage him through positive fan interactions are the best way to aid him as he pursues his dreams.