

Profile



Femme for real

Diane Kruger stretches her acting chops as a wife behind bars in the French thriller *Anything For Her*. By Sarah Lang.

RUNWAY TO REEL: German actress Diane Kruger lost a lot of weight for her role as a prison inmate and mother in *Anything For Her*.

UNTIL A few weeks ago, actress Diane Kruger had never seen her actor boyfriend Joshua Jackson onscreen as *Dawson's Creek's* Pacey.

As you may recall, he was the unlikely heart-throb on the oh-so-melodramatic teen show that ran from 1998 to 2003. "I felt like the only person in the world who'd never seen *Dawson's Creek*," laughs Kruger. "Then, there I was at this Hollywood event honouring Katie Holmes' work and there were lots of clips of her with Pacey. Joshua looked a little fat, kind of bloated. He called me and I said, 'Oh my God, I'm watching you'. He was like 'Leave already, don't watch!' It was so funny."

Married at 23 to French actor Guillaume Canet — it ended amicably in 2006 — Kruger, now 33, is in a long-distance relationship with Jackson, who's been filming the hit series *Fringe* in his hometown Vancouver. When she's not visiting him or her native Germany, Kruger divides her time between New York, LA and Paris. "Relationships are hard at the best of time, and ours takes a lot of effort, but I've learned some strategies to make it work, and he really tries," says Kruger.

Cut to the reason why the film world's It-Girl is excusing herself from a dinner in Berlin to take a call from a New Zealand journalist. Her new film, *Anything For Her*, is in cinemas here. There's no doubt the trilingual star with box-office pulling power was a dream "get" for the French flick, which Kruger describes as "a thriller and a fresh, interesting take on a pure love story". She plays prison inmate/mother Lisa, sent down for murder thanks to compelling circumstantial evidence. But her husband Julien (Vincent Lindon) will stop at nothing to get her out. Is she innocent, or is he blinded by love?

Although playing a woman on the brink of suicide was daunting, Kruger always tries to choose roles that push her, "or else you get soft. If I'm not scared of my next movie or part I'm

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DIANE KRUGER

not sure I can give of my life to it," she says in her endearingly clunky English. "As I've become more mature, I go for [films with] life experiences I want to share. You want to defend women that touch you; women I might not like but who intrigue me and I try to understand. And I'd never played someone like Lisa."

Feeling the part of Lisa "wasn't quite all there", she asked for input into fleshing out her character, and got it. "I originally was nervous with a first-time director [Fred Cavaye] — you never know what you're getting yourself into — but he just did great. And Vincent Lindon's a very big French movie star and he really charmed me — so enthusiastic, so knowledgeable and so open to my suggestions.

"You know, often men and boys don't relate [to women] very well, but he did."

Before filming, Kruger hadn't thought much about imprisonment — until the director recreated a modern-day jail. "What really shocked me was they take your clothes off, they cut you down, you don't decide anything, nothing at all. There's no more you. You're just a number. You're an animal to a certain extent."

Just as beautiful in prison garb and a makeup-free face, Kruger shed "a lot" of weight for the role. "I do lose weight very easily, though I'm pretty sure that's just going to stop in a few years." So, what was the hardest part, then? "You might think it sounds silly but it was the rejection by my child."

Speaking in the first person as Lisa, Kruger's talking about her on-screen son Oscar, who won't talk to his mother on prison visits. "I like children and have many godchildren, and I want children, at least one, but I don't have any

yet. So it took me by surprise that rejection, and not being able to protect my child really upset me a lot."

One of Kruger's meatiest roles to date, Lisa is a far cry from the femme fatales of *Troy* and *Inglorious Basterds*. That said, Kruger had to do more than simper and smoke to pick up a 2009 Golden Globe nomination, and Germany's coveted Goldene Kamera, for her part as *Basterds'* undercover agent Bridget. Kruger's not one to pretend others are welcome to the accolades. "When I find out I'm yelling and screaming! I never, ever, in my wildest dreams thought my life would turn out like this."

Growing up in a little German village, Kruger never thought of herself as pretty. Her childhood was scarred by an alcoholic father. Burying herself in ballet, she left Germany to train with London's Royal Ballet, but her dreams were dashed by a leg injury at 13. At 15, she moved to Paris to model. At 21, and modelling for the likes of Chanel and Giorgio Armani, she quit.

"I got bored. It [modelling] was fun for a while and it allowed me to see the world and be financially independent, which was a huge thing when you're that young, but it was just like 'how many poses can you learn?'"

Cue drama school, though she never craved fame. "I just wanted to be an actress. My first movies went straight to DVD but I just knew I was doing what I wanted to do." Then, in 2004, she was chosen from 3000 women as the face that launched a thousand ships: Helen of Troy. Not only did *Troy* catapult her to stardom, she got to work with Peter O'Toole and Brad Pitt. "When Brad and I first worked together I was

so green and totally overwhelmed and he was very handsome. So it was nice to see him again later on in the journey [in *Basterds*]."

Nowadays, you're just as likely to spot Kruger as Pitt in red-carpet snaps. This fashion darling never puts a foot wrong in the style stakes — even the bitchiest gossip mags find it hard to fault her. And there's no stylist: Kruger picks her own outfits and does her own makeup. "I don't want to look like some Barbie Doll and I don't want to be told what to wear. I don't really care what anyone thinks of what I wear, I just want to look like who I am, not like everybody else."

In December, Kruger was named global spokesperson for L'Oreal. "I've got to tell you I was very surprised when they called. I thought 'Wow, I've got something I can show my kids, and they're not going to believe Mummy looked like that.'" Sure, being named in most-beautiful and sexiest-women lists is flattering, she admits. "But I try not to pay too much attention to it. I try to make the most of what I've been given. I try to look in the mirror each day and think that I'm still an okay person. I try to do my best. And it's really nice when some [people] like what you do, too."

Anything For Her is in cinemas now; review, p16.

Giveaway

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