

Jodie Foster on Nim's Island and more

by Joey_Berlin

Jodie Foster serves as the model for all child stars who want to keep their Hollywood careers thriving. Foster once admitted that she had her share of shaky off-screen moments as a teenage actress, but thankfully the paparazzi were not so interested then in documenting the starlet's missteps.

JODIE FOSTER - In 'Nim's Island,' Jodie Foster plays a reclusive writer of wild adventure tales who reluctantly joins her friend on a hunt for the girl's missing father. CNS Photo courtesy of Fox. Although her best-known early role was "Taxi Driver," she has actually been in the public eye since the age of 3. Commercials came first, then assorted television parts, and eventually two Best Actress Academy Awards.

Now 45, Foster is making a marked departure from the moody dramas that have traditionally been her bread and butter with "Nim's Island," a family action comedy. Foster plays the ironically reclusive writer of wild adventure tales. She reluctantly joins Nim, played by young Abigail Breslin, on a hunt for the girl's missing father on a remote island.

Foster is currently looking to work on her third film as a director, while raising two young sons with her partner, Cydney Bernard.

Q: Did it feel strange to act silly in "Nim's Island?"

A: Yeah, but I think silly is good. You're looking for that. What's interesting to me with this movie is that I find myself talking about things like her fear and this sort of solitary world that she's created, finding a hero in yourself. Those are all themes that I've played in dramas many, many times, very dark dramas, and here I am doing a comedy about them. It's kind of like making fun of your most precious thing. You're making fun of the little fragile parts of yourself. You have to have an ability to make fun of yourself in order to be a comedy actor.

Q: Is there anything you would not do for a laugh in a movie?

A: I'm sure there's plenty of Jim Carrey-esque stuff that I'm not sure I'd be well equipped to do, that my sons just love. I like physical comedy, but I like wit. I like scripts that have a wit to them, a wit to the language and a wit to the timing. So I'm not sure I would be funny in, like, a silent movie, for example. I think my humor is kind of language-based, but my natural humor is sort of dry and nasty and kind of R-rated, a little.

Q: What was your impression of your young co-star, Abigail Breslin?

A: Oh, Abigail is great. Because I was a child actor from the time I was 3, I do see bits and pieces of myself, as a kid, in her. She's got a great family that comes with her. She's very well adjusted and she likes to just get on with it. She likes to just do her job and not dwell on the acting stuff.

But she has something that I don't have, or that I didn't have as a young person. She has this very strong access to her emotions. That's so easy for her. She's really born to be an actress and I really didn't have that at her age. And so it's fun for me to see that, to look at a kid and go, wow, that kid is born to be an actor.

Q: You had to lobby hard to get this part. After all of your accomplishments, was that an odd experience?

A: No, I'm used to it. I think all the movies that have been the most satisfying in some ways, and that have been fundamentally big performance experiences - "The Silence of the Lambs," "The Accused" - were all movies I had to lobby for, that they didn't want me for. So I've learned that's a key. If you want it that badly, then there must be a reason why.

Q: What did you do to seal the deal and get the part?

A: I just waited. I kind of waited and waited for their deal to fall out with the distributor that they had. The directors were always behind me, and that really helped.

Q: When "Nim's Island" comes out on DVD, will it also be on Blu-Ray? Are you into getting the latest gadgets and technology at all?

A: Yeah, it will. I'm not that much of a technology person. I'm usually about six years behind everybody. I finally just got "Guitar Hero" and I was like, "Oh, my God. This is so fabulous." Everyone was like, "Where have you been?"

Q: So you play some video games? Can you play "Guitar Hero" well?

A: No, I'm still on "easy," but I'm like at 99 percent on "easy." It's great, so great.

Q: What do you do to stay in such good shape?

A: Well, I'm a body person so I like to go to the gym or I like to ski or yoga or hike, just sort of get out of my head. I was raised in Southern California, so that's what we do. That's how we cope with all of our neuroses.

Q: Do you really have a lot of neuroses?

A: Well, people always say, "Oh, you're so well adjusted." I'm like, "I'm nutty as a fruitcake! Did you not know that?" There's no way that I could have been raised with this series of events that I've been raised with and not be affected by it in some ways, whether it's phobias or whatever.

But you come up with a methodology to protect yourself. And my way is to compartmentalize. So I work from 9 to 5. And one day my job might be acting and emotion, another day it might be putting on makeup and wearing fancy clothes for an event, and another day it might be talking about myself all day, like today.

That's just my job, and at 5 o'clock when I come home I put that away. That's not who I am. I have to designate a real difference between my professional life and my personal life, and that's not so easy for a lot of people to do.

How do you compartmentalize your emotions? And there's a real impact from that, that makes me nutty as a fruitcake.

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