TV Close-Up: Kristanna Loken

by Eirik_Knutzen

Inspired by the intensity and passion generated by a movie - its title long forgotten - Kristanna Loken was only 13 years old when she decided to become an actress.

Smartly, she asked her mother, "How do I get to do that?"

KRISTANNA LOKEN - Kristanna Loken, seen here from a scene in 'Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines,' will play the lead in Sci-Fi's 'Painkiller Jane' drama series. CNS Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.Her mother, former big-time fashion model Rande, had a fair idea, but deferred the matter to Kristanna's father, ex-actor and screenwriter Chris Loken.

Both were heavily involved in show business on the East Coast before they bought an organic fruit farm near the hamlet of Ghent in Upstate New York.

"We talked it over and once convinced that I was serious, they took me into New York City to meet my dad's old talent agent," said Loken, now blond and gorgeous at 27. "Things kind of snowballed from there, starting with about a year on the soap 'As the World Turns' (as the third incarnation of Danielle 'Dani' Andropolus)."

It was an excellent launch for an acting career, and a one-year brush with fashion modeling that has led to her current title role in a comic book-based drama series called "Painkiller Jane." She portrays Jane Vasco, once a top Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent, who is pressed into service by a federal law enforcement agency so secret that it has no name and no discernible mailing address at its abandoned subway platform HQ.

Rather than tracking serious drug dealers, distributors and manufacturers, Painkiller Jane, nicknamed by her father due to her mental ability to push through physical pain, is now charged with holding Neuros (human-like individuals with superhuman neurological powers ranging from thought control and telekinesis to hallucinations) in check.

Unchecked, the funny-eyed Neuros can wreak havoc in terms of death and destruction even by accident rather than design on Earth's general population. In the course of chasing mischievous Neuros, Jane Vasco also discovers that she has certain radical powers of her own - including indestructibility. Shoved out of a 46th floor window, she lands hard but keeps on ticking.

When not shooting "Painkiller Jane" in Vancouver, British Columbia, Loken travels frequently on the international film festival circuit to promote "Lime Salted Love" - the independent movie that she produced and starred in last year.

"It's a love, sweat and tears project - a very dark story sort of like David Lunch meets '21 Grams,'" she explained, laughing. "It's about a love triangle of very young people in L.A. dealing with childhood trauma and how it shaped their sexuality as adults."

The shapely Loken will also make herself available to hype the September release of "Dungeon Siege: In the Name of the King," a costly medieval fantasy epic already in the can for two years. She plays a tree nymph in magical forest with Burt Reynolds as the king and Jason Statham as the hero.

"Playing a tree nymph is a completely new experience for me," she said. "It required lots of (painful) lyrical wire work in the forest without a second unit director."

Loken works hard, but also plays hard between projects. An excellent equestrienne, she has traversed on horseback such diverse areas as the Big Island of Hawaii and northeastern Ireland in the company of friends and acquaintances.

The most exotic ride to date, however, was a 300-mile Namibia adventure in 2001 through some of southwest Africa's most rugged terrain.

"It was an unparalleled experience that started out in the capital, Windhoek, and wound up in the heart of the Namib Desert," she recalled. "I went with a girlfriend and we hooked up with a half-dozen other riders, mostly German, and some veteran guides. It's not for everyone, especially with about 115 degrees every day. Not only do you have to be fit, but an excellent rider.

"But what a ride! We were out there in the middle of herds of wild animals, including zebras, oryx, kudus and springbok," she continued. "We slept under the stars and ate wild game. Being completely cut off from the rest of the world was an amazing thing. We didn't find out about 9/11 until after we got back a week later."

The actress already had extensive screen credits - including the series "Pensacola: Wings of Gold" (1997-98) and "Mortal Kombat: Conquest" (1998-99) - before she garnered international recognition as the lethal TX (Terminatrix) opposite California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in the block buster movie "Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines." She also holds the title role in "BloodRayne."

She is currently seen as single mother Paige Sobel in the lesbian-oriented series "The L-Word" based in Vancouver, but somehow has time to nurture an intense personal relationship back home in Los Angeles.

"I'm single, but seeing someone who will remain nameless - I'm not telling," she teased. "I would love to have a family someday, but not yet."

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