



Chatting with Emma Roberts: the new NANCY DREW

EMMA ROBERTS came to Chicago last month to meet with fans & members of the press. Maureen Gombas & Jan Lisa Huttner talked with Emma about how she prepared herself for the classic role, what it's like to be a young Hollywood actress, & what she hopes Nancy will say to young girls in the audience.



Photo Credits: Emma Roberts as "Nancy Drew" in Warner Bros. Pictures' and Virtual Studios' family mystery adventure NANCY DREW, distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures.
Photos by Melinda Sue Gordon. All Rights Reserved.

JAN: What appealed to you about the character of Nancy Drew in particular?

EMMA: She's just such an iconic character. Everybody knows her. Young girls read the books. Older women read the books. When I read the script, it stood out to me as a great project that I thought kids would enjoy, mothers would enjoy, parents, aunts, grandmas... everyone would love it.

MAUREEN: A lot of people think that the way girls see themselves portrayed in the media affects their self-image. What did you want Nancy Drew to “say” to young girls through the way you play her character?

EMMA: Nancy Drew is very sharp and she’s not afraid to be herself. Like when she arrives at her new school, and the kids are making fun of her, she just kind of shrugs it off and keeps going. So I think her perseverance through that is going to show young women that it’s okay to be a little bit different.

JAN: What influences helped you create your Nancy?

EMMA: I have actresses that I really admire, but none that specifically helped me create Nancy Drew. I like Reese Witherspoon and Drew Barrymore a lot because they’ve been acting since they were younger and they’ve done some great movies.

But I guess you could say it was mostly something I did along with the director. The writing in the script [by Tiffany Paulsen] helped a lot too, along with the clothing and hair changes. I think those are really important in the film. And I wanted to make Nancy Drew a real person. She’s like this perfect girl in some ways, but I still wanted her to be relatable. I want girls to think that they can be like her. Or just want to be her friend.

MAUREEN: I’ve heard that you like to read a lot. Are there any books with strong female characters that you think would make a great film, one that you would like to be a part of, one that gives as much agency to the female lead as NANCY DREW?

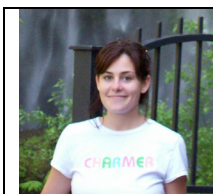
EMMA: I’m trying to think...there aren’t a lot of books out there with one main character who’s a strong independent girl. Actually it’s really funny because a lot of books I’ve read I think would make great movies or TV shows—and then I find out they’re already making it! It happens to me all the time. I’ll tell my manager, ‘This is great. We should try to make this.’ He’s like, ‘They’ve already made it.’

I’m excited about the GOSSIP GIRL series, though. It’s going to be on the CW network. And I really like the book MY SISTER’S KEEPER by Jodi Picoult. It’s about a girl who has cancer, and her sister is her donor. I’d like to make that a movie at some point.

JAN: So much has changed in women’s lives in these past seven decades, yet Nancy’s character seems timeless. That’s a real paradox, isn’t it? How do explain that to yourself when you’re trying to create this girl whose attitude is very formal in some ways and yet...

EMMA: Right, she’s very proper and well-mannered, but her essence is still relatable to girls today, just like it was 50 years ago. She’s all about girl power: she really does do things on her own and she’s very brave and independent.

© Maureen Gombas & Jan Lisa Huttner (6/15/07)



Maureen Gombas recently completed her B.A. in English & Gender Studies at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. For fun, she likes to read/watch media through a feminist lens. Needless to say, Maureen is very excited to be working on WITASWAN projects this summer!