



A Woman of Action

Anjelica Huston dishes about her new role as a Russian assassin, the hardest part of any acting job, and what it was like to grow up in Hollywood.

BY TOMMIE ETHINGTON

Q: Did you always want to be an actress?

A: Yes, I always knew I wanted to be an actress. When I was a child, I thought actresses were kind of exotic, rarified creatures. They got to wear a lot of beautiful dresses and good jewels, and I thought that was pretty great [laughs].

Your dad, director John Huston, knew a lot of people in the business. Was there ever a time that you were starstruck?

My first memorable meeting with an actress was with Ava Gardner. I met her at an opera that my father was directing at La Scala in Milan. I was gobsmacked. She was the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen.

What do you remember about your first acting gig?

My first big gig was in the hallway of my parents' house in Ireland with Peter O'Toole and his wife as my audience. I was 9 years old, and it was a failed attempt at the witches from "the Scottish play." I

forgot my lines over the burning cauldron, so I didn't get very far with that, but then I made a movie with my father when I was 16 called *A Walk with Love and Death*. That was my first official gig.

Did your dad provide you with any professional guidance?

He emphasized knowing one's lines, which I think is still No. 1. That's the hard part of acting—buckling down and concentrating on getting all of that straight. But if you know anything well enough, you can do that much more with it and make it your own.

How do you approach a role?

I think, ideally, you have to overcome all your fears about your lines or about fitting in or having the character fit you. At a certain point, you just have to throw it all up in the air and just allow it to be. If a part is well-written, it's like putting on a protective coat. It really takes you over. The best feeling is when you're an instrument of the part instead of trying to push the part into any sort of framework.

What appealed to you about *John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum*?

Well, first of all, I'm a huge Keanu Reeves fan and have been since *The Matrix*. I also loved the idea of being in an action movie, and I like strong female roles. In the film, I play the director of the assassins' headquarters.

What was it like being on set with Keanu?

We had a few scenes together and I was kind of scared. I hadn't done a movie like this before, and the action is hard and fast. Also, I had to speak Russian and learn a Russian accent, both of which I'd never done before. My deal was finished quite late on, so I had a lot to do before I started and very little time.

Did Keanu offer any advice?

No, he's very modest. I admire him and really like watching him work. He obviously has a very good time when he's working. He comes in and out all through the day and night to do these scenes. I think one day we had a scene around noon and then he came back again at 3 a.m. for another scene. That's impressive. You don't see a lot of male stars doing that.

Do you think you'll do more action films?

I sure hope so.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

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