



The Commuter

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Hot on the heels of starring roles in several indie features, actress Emmanuelle Vaugier seized the spotlight in a small but sexy part opposite Josh Hartnett in last year's *40 Days and 40 Nights*. She followed up with a recurring role as Dr. Helen Bryce, Lex Luthor's girlfriend on the hit WB drama, *Smallville*. This fall she's back on the big screen in her juiciest role yet, as Princess Jasmine in New Line Cinema's *Secondhand Lions* starring Robert Duvall, Michael Caine and Haley Joel Osment.

Vaugier, who grew up in a French speaking household (both of her parents are from France), currently divides her time between Vancouver and Los Angeles. She talked with us about her growing career.

You started as a model?

I've always been interested in acting, ever since second grade when I first got the bug, but I took a modeling class when I was 14, just for fun. A scout asked if I would consider going overseas and modeling professionally. It wasn't something I'd ever thought about, but you know I thought, why not? Then my parents were a bit uncomfortable with me going so we waited until I was the ripe old age of 16. Then I went to Japan.

How did you make the transition into acting?

I knew I wanted to get into film, so I started looking for an agent. One signed me and started sending me out on commercials and then on speaking roles.

What would you call your 'big break'?

I ended up booking the lead in a Showtime movie of the week called the *Half Back of Notre Dame*. That opened a lot doors for me. Everybody was asking, who's the new girl who's just booked the lead? It let me jump right into the thick of things.

I had done a pilot for Fox Kids, something like 90210 type show, except it was really low budget and well, not 90210. It never went anywhere. And I also did a small part in a Faye Dunaway movie for NBC, but *Half Back* was my first big role.

We were all about the same age, everybody got along, the weather was beautiful – it was like summer camp. It was so much fun.

It sounds like you've had good experience.

Still to this day, I haven't really had a bad experience. I mean, you have good days and bad days, but on the whole I've been treated very well. I've had the opportunity to work with very talented people. I feel lucky.

You've done both television and film, how are they different?

In TV, there's a lot less time. You're shooting eight pages a day, so you can't really play with scenes. With a feature, depending on budget, you're shooting a page, maybe two pages a day, so you have the option of being a bit more creative. You can actually watch the playback. Both are challenging and I think you have to be talented to do both well.

Tell us a little about working on *40 Days and 40 Nights*.

It was a big studio movie, so that was a jump into a new league for me. It gave me quite a bit of exposure and created a bit of a fan base. It got me into certain rooms. People were able to say, 'she did a movie with Josh Hartnett.' It was quite a memorable role, so even though it wasn't a huge part, you could tell people who it was. And I had an opportunity to work with Josh and Michael Lehmann, a great director, and some wonderful producers.

What lessons did you learn on a big Hollywood movie?

Modesty takes up too much time! (laughs) It's a little bit of a risqué kind of scene, you don't see much, a lot of it is insinuated and we were all taped up. But the first ten minutes were highly uncomfortable because I kept thinking, 'everybody's looking at me.' Then you get over yourself. You get over insecurities and fears quickly because there's just no room for it.

Now you've got *Secondhand Lions* coming out.

It's funny how that came about. *Aladdin* has always been my favourite Disney movie. For some reason last summer, my friends and I were listening to the soundtrack a lot and singing along to Princess Jasmine's song. Then I get the call to audition for the role of Princess Jasmine in *Secondhand Lions*.

When I read the script, it took me on a journey. I cried and laughed. You rarely do that out loud. It was heartfelt and well written and something I really wanted to do. When my agent told me I got it I just started screaming. I was so excited. It's such a great cast. I play Duvall's love interest at an earlier age.





What kind of film would you love to do?

I would love to do something like *Chicago* or *Moulin Rouge*, something that required singing and dancing. That or an all action film like *The Matrix* or *Charlie's Angels*, where you have to train for six months. Something fun where you get to work at another aspect of yourself, talent-wise.

What's next for you?

I'm back for a third season of *Smallville* on the WB network. I have a recurring role as Lex's girlfriend, but who knows what's next. Things change week to week in this business. I love that. I like having things fresh and exciting. And I really love not what's going to happen next.

What lesson did you learn on a big Hollywood set?

Modesty when you are stuck there? (Laughs) It's a little bit of a stage hand of sorts, you don't see much, a lot of it is postponed or not even all taped up. But the few scenes we were really uncomfortable because I kept thinking, "somebody's looking at me, somebody's looking at me." Then you get over yourself. You get over insecurity and then quickly because there's just no time for it.

How do you get yourself into coming on?

It's funny how that came about. Michelle has always been my favorite. I know, I know. For some reason but because, my friends and I were listening to the soundtrack a lot and singing along to Bruce Springsteen's song. Then I got the call to audition for the role of Jessica Lawrence in *Smallville*.

When I read the script, it took me on a journey. I cried and laughed. You really do that one book. It was beautiful and well-written and something I really wanted to do. When my agent told me I got it I just started screaming. I was so excited. It's such a great cast. I hope there's less internet in a while ago.

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Smallville comes to television this September. *Smallville* comes to television again this fall on the WB network. ■