



Oh, Canada!

Smallville squeeze Emmanuelle Vaugier discovers it's good to be the princess in *Secondhand Lions*.

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The first thing you think when you approach Emmanuelle Vaugier is, "What kind of accent is going to come out of this girl's mouth?" Actually, if you're a guy, the first thing you think is, "Holy Jumping Hannah, what an incredibly hot looking tamale!" This is assuming you regularly use the terms "Holy Hannah" or "tamale."

But while this Vancouver-born beauty has the exotic good looks to play foreign royalty (she's been cast as a princess at least twice), Emmanuelle's speaking voice practically screams "All-American Girl," right down to her frequent use of the word "nope."

Emmanuelle has recently made waves with a recurring role on *Smallville* and she's about to be seen in the fanciful New Line adventure feature *Secondhand Lions*. But she's often cast as an exotic foreign beauty.

"I fall into that category," the actress admits regarding her indefinable ethnic looks. "I am lucky because I fall in between the cracks – I can make myself look exotic depending on what I wear and my makeup, or I can just be some white guy's daughter who has dark hair but has no ethnic or exotic background. I can put on an accent if I need to but at the same time I don't get categorized as a foreign girl."

Hey, Let's face it – Emmanuelle really IS foreign! But like many Canadians, she's learned to walk unsuspected among us foolish Americans.

"Before I went to school, French was the first language in my household because my parents had just moved there from France," she says. "I spoke French and English, but as soon I got into school, it was English only."

While Emmanuelle got one of her first acting jobs because she still had a French accent, she has since eliminated that entirely, and she says she's adjusting nicely to life in Los Angeles.

"The only difference I notice is that people will be nice to you here because they can get something from you," she says. "It's harder to find true friends, and it took me a while to get a good circle of friend I can trust. The other thing is that L.A. is so spread out. I never go downtown. In most other cities, downtown is here everything happens – that's where the malls and shops are, but here there are so many other places to go and you have to drive there. Since I moved here I think I've been downtown only three times."

In *Secondhand Lions*, Emmanuelle is featured as – yes, believe it or not – a princess name Jasmine. Haley Joel Osment plays a shy young kid sent to visit his eccentric uncles in Texas, played by Michael Caine and a very crusty Robert Duvall – but these guys have a whole secret Indiana Jones - style adventure history that Haley Joel's character uncovers.

As Emmanuelle explains, "he finds a picture of princess Jasmine and wonders who she is, and starts asking questions so the story is slowly unravelled the course of the movie. I can't say what happens to me without giving away the end of the movie. You see our adventures and the love story and that kind of thing. We ride horses and run away from bad guys – it's all about forbidden love between a princess and a common guy."

Emmanuelle did some horseback riding for the role – her scenes take place in the 1920s – and employed a few tactical manoeuvres known only to exotic Arabian princesses. "I didn't get to shoot any guns, but I did throw spice in somebody's face," she describes. "We're in a market and some bad guys are chasing us and I turn, grab a handful of spice and throw it in a guy's face. That was my tough princess thing."

The actress's other high-profile role has been the main squeeze of the soon-to-be most evil guy on the planet – Lex Luthor (Michael Rosenbaum) – on the WB Networks hit *Smallville*, on which she plays Dr. Helen Bruce.

"And I'm also now Lex Luthor's wife," Emmanuelle admits, revealing her intimate yet professional relationship with pre Superman Clark Kent (Tom Welling). "I'm the Kent's family doctor and they're asking me for advice on their son. I know about Clark's blood and I know about Clark so the producers are going to have to kill me off at some point. So far I'm not evil, but they haven't told me anything and I honestly have no idea what will happen."

Emmanuelle says being involved with Luthor isn't always a creep as one might think. It's a very mature relationship, probably one of the stronger relationships Lex has had and has lasted the longest by far," she points out. "But it has its ups and downs and we have our trust issues with each other, whether I can trust him a 100% and whether he's telling me everything, and so there's been some problems where I've left him or we've had arguments and he's broken into my office at one point and that was kind of a biggie. That almost meant not marriage – but I still married him. Helen





came crawling back!”

You have to wonder, though – wouldn't a guy like Lex Luthor have some kind of incredibly kinky sex life? “It's the WB, not Showtime or HBO, so we can't show Lex's kinky sex life,” Emmanuelle argues. “At this point it's more innocent than it appears, but I'm thinking something's going to happen where it prompts him to start going down the path of being more like his father. That's the storyline of what eventually happens to Lex. Whether that happens because of my character or something that happens to my character or whatever, he has to go down that path.”

Lex and Helen didn't even have the luxury of a normal honeymoon. “It ended in a fiery plane crash,” she laughs. “We get on the Luthorcorp private jet and have a glass of champagne and we're all happy and married and it cuts to Lex waking up, I'm not there, the pilot and crew are gone and all the controls are smashed and the plane is heading for the ocean.”

You'd think a girl would know better than to get on the Luthorcorp jet in the first place. But this sounds suspiciously like Emmanuelle's character was behind the whole thing. “It appears so,” she admits. “That would be the logical explanation but I'm hoping they come up with something clever and convoluted that might work.”

Emmanuelle played another physician on *Charmed* – a sexy gypsy physician, that is. “She was a doctor who rejected her gypsy heritage,” she describes. “She thought the magic in the gypsy heritage had killed her mother – who died of cancer or some horrible disease because she didn't want to be treated with regular medicine – so I have a huge issue with that. Meanwhile, an evil demon is killing the kind of person I am in the gypsy culture, so I have to help my aunt fight him. I was supposed to go back and do their 100th episode – they had loosely established me as the doctor for Holly Marie-Combs' baby. I think it's bit of a magic baby, isn't it? So they can pretend it was magically born without a doctor – anything is possible in TV land.”

Like many a Hollywood actress, Emmanuelle cut her teeth doing low-budget horror films, one of the most recent being the otherwise forgettable *Wishmaster 3*. “I just played a college girl that got killed,” she remembers. “She's slightly promiscuous and wants to sleep with her professor but is killed by a demon.”

This role was only one of the latest in a long line of parts in which Emmanuelle bites the big one. “It's kind of running joke with my girlfriends when I tell them about my parts. It's like, ‘Okay, do you die in this one too?’ Because I've been killed in quite a few things.”

Like, in say, *Ripper*? What happens to her in that one? “I die!” she admits. “I'm a student and I'm investigating some mysterious deaths, so of course I'm in the morgue by myself in the middle of the night – because we all do that – and then all hell breaks loose.” Then there's the TV movie *Return to the Cabin by the Lake*. “I die in that too!” Emmanuelle boasts. “But I get poisoned, so it's not too glamorous. Judd Nelson had planned it, so me and Brian Krause from *Charmed* got drugged and we both pass out on the bed.”

Emmanuelle is happy to change the subject to the cult-'n'-psychics pic *Mindstorm*. “I live all the way through that one. I played a cop and all I did was handle a gun – a really small gun – so it wasn't that exciting. I handled a rifle on *Seven Days* – and I played a princess in that too. It was really exciting – the funniest thing is that I had to swivel around and shoot a chandelier, but I'm wearing a gown. So it didn't quite work on the first couple of takes.”

For the indie thriller *Sculptress*, Emmanuelle got stretched in a different direction. “This was fun because it was something I don't usually get to play; a trailer-trash whore!”

Suddenly our estimation of the interview has gone through the ceiling. “She works at this peep-show place,” the actress describes. “It was cool because I don't ever get to do stuff like that – they usually want some bleach-blonde girl who looks like she's been through a lot. But we made it work! The character's not really a stripper, she's more like a peep-show girl where they insinuate but you don't really see anything. The curtains always go down before you see anything – but that's the magic of negotiation!”

Damn all of Hollywood's agents to Hell for that one...

So Emmanuelle did not reveal all in *Sculptress*, but she did let it all hang out in the comedy *40 Days and 40 Nights*. Unfortunately for all dedicated male readers, the only thing this experience proves is that it's really good to be Josh Hartnett.

“I did a bit of nudity in that,” she admits. “But that was really well-shot in the sense of all my close-ups were of my face and not of my boobs and my face.”

We would argue with this particular definition of “well-shot” – and will argue the point with *40 Days* cinematographer Elliot Davis at a later date – but that's just going to make us look pretty. So if nothing was really shown in this scene, why did Emmanuelle have to be nude in it? “Well, it was a sex

scene with Josh Hartnett," she explains. "He was an absolute dream and so sweet and a very nice guy." Uh-huh. Whatever.

While Emmanuelle had done some modeling before her acting career began, 40 Days and 40 Nights will still always be her first nude experience on film. "It was a little unnerving at first and I didn't know what to expect," she describes. "I'd never done anything to that extent. "I'm sure I could have pounded a few tequila shots first in my trailer but I refrained from that – it was a silly comedy, so I was watching My Best Friend's Wedding in my trailer before the shoot to get me in the right mindset. It was a closed set and you're kind of taped up in your privates and things like that. Everyone was really cool and they showed me playback every time and you couldn't see anything, so it was good." Good. Uh-huh.

Despite the film's provocative title, Emmanuelle did not get nude in Suddenly Naked. "I play a Latino pop star who's just way too into herself. I didn't have to perform but that would have been fun. You meet her while she's getting a bikini wax – the circumstances of the scene are really ridiculous. It's a comedy. It went to the festivals and had a limited release. I saw it on the previews when they were showing all the Oscar movies and I thought, 'Ooh people who are looking at the Oscar movies will come and see my movie.'"

Emmanuelle wasn't killed in Shapeshifter, but when she was filming the movie in Romania she got to see some of the handiwork of one of history's more infamous killers. "We saw Nicolae Ceausescu's big castle in Bucharest," she recalls. "It was bizarre because a lot of the castles are totally roped off and there's only certain parts they'll show you. Apparently they had these huge marble steps they build that he had redone like 10 times because they weren't to his liking and so many people died in the process of making this castle that its literally like a burial ground. It was horrendous the things that we would hear."

Emmanuelle also has high regard for Shadowwarriors II: Hunt for the Death Merchant. "Another masterpiece," she enthuses. "I had like one line in that. They hired me because I had a French accent, but I think anyone could have gotten away with doing an accent for one line. I wasn't killed, though. I should start a chart and give it to my manager and say, 'Look, I want the members in the 'She Lives' column to be much larger than the numbers in the 'She Dies' column.'"

Despite her long history of onscreen death, Emmanuelle's career is very much alive, and she's seen her profile rise to the point where she's now actually dying less and less often. "I've been getting more opportunities for more quality projects, which has been really great," she attests. "Things have started to heat up – it takes so long to sort of build momentum – and it's like a numbers game down here, but staying in LA and sticking it out and working through the hard times and just doing it and not giving up seems to finally be working."

It certainly does. But now that Emmanuelle's come this far, what kind of roles does she really want to do? With a laugh she says, "I'd love to do a fun, Matrix-y type movie with a lot of gun-toting and running around and shooting stuff, and me wearing patent leather and maybe give me a whip." With that kind of ambition, we suspect we'll be seeing Emmanuelle in Femme Fatales again soon.

By Jeff Bond

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