

SPARTACIUS

THE BRINGER OF RAIN

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INTERVIEW WITH LESLEY-ANN BRANDT

FEBRUARY 2011

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: So before we begin, I want to thank you for allowing me and your fans to interview you!

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: No problem. Love the fans!

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: Let's start out with something simple. Where are you now?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I'm in my newly adopted home of Los Angeles.

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: When you saw yourself on the screen for the first time, what were you thinking?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: First time ever? Well, that would be a TV commercial I did when I first got into acting. I laughed because it didn't sound like me. Actors like to pick themselves apart. Yes, I am one of them, but I'm always curious to see if my intentions for my character are clear in the particular scene... if so then I'm happy.

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: I think comedy and action - though you didn't have the opportunity to do action yet - suits you very well! You were marvelous in 'Diplomatic Immunity'! Which genre is the closest to you?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Nope, can't choose, I love them both. I am a bit of a goof so that side of my personality really enjoys comedy. It's a lot harder than most people think. And then I love getting physical too. I just did a stunt on CSI NY that looks awesome. Can't say much more but I love getting dirty as they say and that's why I loved doing Gladiator Bootcamp. There is a real sense of accomplishment after 2 weeks of that. Not only are you physically stronger, but mentally too. I definitely pushed myself.

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: There are people who are not able to completely separate an actress from her character (in a TV series). Is there any Lesley-Ann in Naevia or any Naevia in Lesley-Ann?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Sure, I think there's a bit of every actor in the character's they play. It doesn't mean I have to be a serial killer to play one, but you filter your character through your body so somewhere along the line, a bit of you does come out. Regarding Naevia, yes, I have some of her in me. I do like to take care of people and I'm certainly not adverse to overcoming challenges like Naevia. But she's a lot more patient than I am in real life! haha

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THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: Do you have a favorite outfit?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I loved my dress towards the end of season one. The one where you could see a bit of thigh. When we were doing the fitting, Barbara, our costume designer was looking in the mirror and said "what do you think if I made a slit here and you have to step into the dress". I loved it so we went with that. Although I have to say, I did have dress envy when it came to Lucretia, Ilithyia and Gaia's dresses. Secretly I think when they went to bed, Naevia and Diona played dressup.

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: When you go out, do you get recognized often?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Ha that's so funny because in the beginning no, they really didn't. Now I get recognized more, I'm catching people staring at me, so I just smile. I have a chameleon look I think. Change my hair color and I looked completely different.

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: I read the other day that you started watching 'Xena'. Do you like it?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I loved seeing Lucy kicking ass!!!

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: Do you have time to focus on your personal life? What do you like to do when you're not working?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Sure, when you're not filming actors have a lot of down time so it pays to keep busy. I'm at the gym, or going to the movies and I'm in class making sure I'm staying on top of my craft.

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: What do you think you would do if you weren't an actress?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Probably something to do with kids or animals. I adore them both. They understand my goofiness and appreciate it, they are my people! :)

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: Is there anyone you'd really like to work with?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Yes, Emily Blunt! I think she is a wonderful young talent and the next generation of the Meryl Streeps and Judi Denches of the world, so add them in the mix too and then put a scoop of Johnny Depp. I learn by watching and I'd love to be a part of a project that would afford me the opportunity to watch these actors work.

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THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: Now tell me what your first day on the Spartacus set was like?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Oh, I was nervous and excited all rolled into one. I hadn't met Lucy or John before and little did I know that the next day I would be filming the infamous hand down the crotch scene with Lucy. Let's just say, we got to know each other really well, very quickly...(laughs out loud).

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: Do you think acting is nature or nurture for you? Were you born an actress? Or were you nurtured to become one?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I think I was born to entertain. I don't know that I definitely wanted to act but I certainly loved performing. I was constantly entertaining my parents with little skits and was in pretty much every school play. I didn't take the traditional path to becoming an actor, but I found my way in the end.

THE BRINGER OF RAIN.NET: Okay, before I let you into the adoring claws of your fans, tell us what's your goal?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Mmmmm, take yoga and stick to it. Have an action film in the bag in the next 2 years and do more traveling.

FAN QUESTIONS

DANIEL SISK: We know you from Spartacus and of course you have upcoming appearances in Chuck and CSI, so my question to you is When will Lesley Ann Brandt officially take over the world and what is her first initiative when it happens?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Ha! Thanks Daniel. Well, I'm currently interviewing for a campaign manager, you interested? I'm just happy to be working on such great shows, so if world domination is the by product, I'm in!

MIRRIAM S: Have you noticed any differences in your life as Spartacus fandom grows and grows, such as people recognizing you on the street, roles you audition for or are offered, etc.?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: People stare at me a lot more. I'm lucky in that you can't really pick my look and therefore I have a lot of diversity with my auditions.

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MANDY SEAMAN: The storyline of Spartacus is obviously fairly intense and dramatic - does life on the set usually reflect that, or is the cast and crew pretty light-hearted to offset the onscreen mood?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: We have a lot of fun on set and that's one of the reasons I love this show. I have formed wonderful friendships with cast and crew. We work, we work, but I think with some of the material we're doing, it's important to have fun too.

IVA ZUGEC: What's the craziest offer/proposal you've received from your fans either on Facebook, via e-mail, etc.?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I got sent an email the other day asking if I could go to the prom, but it's kinda cute, right?

BRENNEN SANDERS: What made you get into acting? Is it something you wanted to do your whole life or you just had a feeling to get up and try it one day?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I've always felt like I wanted to entertain, but my path to acting has been somewhat unconventional. I was a model for about 10 years and gradually started doing my TV commercials that were performance based. With the encouragement of casting directors, I took classes while working full time. I was always the happiest in acting class and continued to audition. I will never forget the day I booked Diplomatic Immunity and had to quit my job as an IT recruiter. My boss at the time was like "this is the best resignation I've ever had, can't wait to see you on TV" ...best day ever!

SILAPU ANK: How do you maintain your beauty? Is there any specific workout regimen or food plan you follow?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I try and take very good care of my skin with my Environ Products. I wear sunscreen every day, especially since moving to sunny Los Angeles. 5 servings of fruit and veg every day, plus 4 days a week workouts keep me healthy and in shape.

IVA ZUGEC: How do you feel while filming nude scenes in Spartacus and when you're doing such scenes do you feel like somebody else? What's happening in your head? How did you managed to beat the eventual discomfort?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: As sexy as the sex scenes look in the show, they really aren't that sexy to film. They are very technical, you have to get lighting right, movement right for the camera... it's definitely not as "free" as it is in real life... ha ha. With Manu, we were respectful of each other, made sure that we were both comfortable with what was going to happen. Regarding the crew, well that for me was the hardest. They are lovely, don't get me

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wrong, but they are the same guys and gals I shoot the shit with at the craft services table and then whoops... there's my butt in the next scene! But like I said, they were amazing, very respectful and that helped me tremendously.

BARBARA BRUNO: Hi Lesley-Ann, thanks for answering our questions! I am a huge fan of the Crixus/Naevia couple. How was it to work with Manu Bennett?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Thanks Barbara! Manu was great and we've formed a good bond him and I. It's always tricky being thrown into a storyline like Crixus and Naevia's. You want to do justice to the respective characters and it was imperative for both Manu and myself that we honor the story of these two. We have developed a good friendship and I just recently hung out with him in Los Angeles.

ERIKA WINTHEISER: From the cast of Spartacus, who would you most like to work with in the future and why?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Oh, Erika you are going to get me in trouble. I love them all!

LAYNE MILLER: If you could go back to season one and put your own little twist on the Spartacus soundtrack, what song would be playing when you and Crixus finally made love? Of course "Let's Get It On" is perhaps one of the most obvious and classic answer to this question. But hopefully, you'll have another song in mind.

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Ha ha, this is a funny question. You're right, "Let's get it On" is a very good choice. If I wanted to take it to a whole other level, listen to Rihanna's "Skin". It's on her latest album. It's kinda very sexy and I think Naevia is a bit of a freak in the bedroom or pantry I should say!

ROBBIE CREANER: As we all know Spartacus is completely different to any other television series, and there are many explicit features within the show. What was your first impression when you read the script?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I was very intrigued, I had a feeling that it was going to be an exciting opportunity for me. I was told that Naevia was probably going to die by the 7th episode and was happy with just being a part of the show to be honest. Then the Naevia and Crixus story took off and as the scripts started coming in, I was very excited. Manu and I knew we had something special here. What I loved is that while the sex and blood will reel you in, it is a character driven show first and foremost and I think that's why it's taken off.

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VLADIMIR ZASYPKIN: What was something you dreaded that happened to your character and something you loved the most?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: For my character, being forced to lay with Ashur (and Nick, I love you), but for my character, that was hard for her, something she wasn't expecting. What I loved was that she finally got to stand up to Lucretia and was as dignified as ever while doing it.

MATTHEW OSTERLOH (a fellow Cape-Tonian): Is it awkward being around Manu when you know you've both seen each other pretty much naked? How do you get over that, or is it actually not that big a deal?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Hou gain ditto met jou? Nah, Manu and I have gotten past that awkwardness and we just want what's best for the scene, but in keeping with what we are both comfortable with.

ARMANDO GARCIA: I saw in a „Behind the Scenes look” that you did the gladiator training. What did your family say when you came back to them totally ripped?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I don't know that I was totally ripped but I was able to beat up my little brother who's 18... that was fun!

ERIKA WINTHEISER: Your skin is absolutely flawless, is there any special skincare that you use?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Thank you, that's very sweet of you to say. Yes, Environ skincare, lots of sunscreen, lots of water and never go to bed with your makeup on!

MICHELLE FISHER: How can you stand working with all those ripped, gorgeous men and still keep your composure? I think I would not be able to deliver a coherent sentence if it were me.

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I'm so over it!! Yeah, right! Oh, I don't know, it's all in a days work I suppose. But FYI, they're not as hot when they are protein farting up the training square..... I'm just saying. hahahahaha

MYRA BERNARDINO: What dialogue do you like to do better? Period pieces (such as Spartacus) or normal, modern dialogue?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: No preference really, I enjoy whatever challenges me. The dialogue in Spartacus was tricky at first because they have a roundabout way of saying things, but you get used to it.

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PRATIK: How does it feel to play a much younger inexperienced Naevia this season compared to the first season?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: It was fun to bring the girl out in Naevia, she was happier so innocent and her petals were definitely not bruised. Lucy said it best, we don't often get to revisit our characters as actors and it's great to show the audience all the work we did as backstories for our characters. Of course the writing is an important part of the equation also.

KEVIN DUNCAN: Hi Lesley-Ann! Okay, here is my question: What is on your bedside table?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: A picture of my boyfriend and me, a clock and my iPhone.

JOHN ARMES: You are obviously a talented and versatile actress, would you ever consider doing a singing or dancing role in the west end or Broadway or even film?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I would love to! My goal as an actor to never be comfortable. Right now, I am hoping to be able to work with a theater director friend of mine. I always want to be challenged because that's how I'll grow and learn.

QUEEN: What do you love most about being an actress and what do you find to be challenging?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I love the fact that I have found something that brings me tremendous joy and I'm able to have an income while doing it. A lot of my friends are in jobs that they don't like so I'm fortunate not to be in that position. The challenge is that this job can be all consuming and for me I'm learning to find that balance. My family, friends are very good at keeping me grounded.

QUEEN: If you could pick any movie or tv show to star in, what would it be and what's your dream role?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I would love to do a female James Bond type film. I know Angelina Jolie attempted this with Salt, but a big action film is my goal.

JAMES CARROLL: Ms. Brandt, You and Ms. Law and Ms. Cummings sent my Army unit great videos. When is the cast of Spartacus coming to visit us in Iraq with a USO tour?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: I would love to do a USO tour and was really honored to have the opportunity to talk to you guys!! I don't know how you go about being invited but let me know and Be safe, please! xxx

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BONNIE LYNN ARMENDARIZ: Have you ever considered writing a book about your life in Cape Town, and what you have achieved and hope to one day achieve?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: It's funny you asked that because Nick Tarabay told me I should write a book just the other day. Perhaps I should, Bonnie!

ANDRAE BUTLER: I know you must get hit on a lot being so beautiful, but what approach do you think women like yourself are flattered by the most?

LESLEY-ANN BRANDT: Firstly thank you. I can't really speak for other women but for me... The way to my heart is through laughter for sure. I like confidence without arrogance and I definitely like masculine man who isn't afraid to be vulnerable.