

Summer Glau is the Terminator

The 'Sarah Connor' star talks robots and the future.

Fred Topel, CraveOnline

January 7, 2008

Terminator 2 gave kids the fantasy of having a powerful robot friend. The Sarah Connor Chronicles gives grown ups a different sort of fantasy. Summer Glau plays the new protector terminator, named Cameron, coming to save teenage John Connor. What's a growing boy to do with a female robot friend? Whether the show goes there or not, at least we get to see Glau kicking butt again when the show premieres in January on Fox.

Crave Online: How did it feel to say, "Come with me if you want to live?"

Summer Glau: The first time I did it, I burst out laughing. I just couldn't believe that I was getting to say that line. And David made fun of me and we turned around and set it again. That second take was the only take we did. It was like that, that's the one. I hope it comes across. I'm honored.

Crave Online: How do you feel about playing another supergirl?

Summer Glau: I feel so excited. I just couldn't believe that I was even seriously considered for this role to be honest. I just guess I have it in mind what I think supergirl is like. What I loved so much about this story is that she's supposed to be just a normal girl. She's supposed to blend in and then out of nowhere she saves the day. That's why I fell in love with the role.

Crave Online: What model of terminator is Cameron?

Summer Glau: Well, Cameron is supposed to be the most advanced model of terminators. Josh's idea is that the way that she's more advanced than the rest of them, she's more human than the rest. Even her slightest mannerisms, they're programmed but they're so human. She's so hard to detect and that's what makes her special and I think that's what makes her so much fun to play.

Crave Online: Do you get to use any of your Serenity moves?

Summer Glau: I might have snuck a few of them in so far but the thing that's different about Cameron is she fights like a machine. River was all about finesse and it was all martial arts. This is not martial arts at all. She just has brute force. So I'm always using guns, I'm running people over with cars, I'm throwing people around. It's much more brutish which has been fun.

Crave Online: Do you know the backstory of Skynet and how they improved her model?

Summer Glau: I know a little bit about it but you should ask Josh [Friedman]. We don't know a whole lot about the backstory. There's one scene that I did when I auditioned for the role that told me a little bit more about where she came from but I don't know a whole lot. I can't wait to find out.

Crave Online: Is being a new character better for you? Would you have minded playing an existing one?

Summer Glau: I think it's more of a challenge to play a character that already exists and make it fresh, so I do feel that I have it maybe a little easier than Lena and Thomas. But

I think they've taken it on and taken it to a new level. I am so impressed by their performances.

Crave Online: Are you taking anything from the Arnold, Robert Patrick or Kristanna Loken performances?

Summer Glau: Well, of course I adore Arnold Schwarzenegger and I don't know if I'm going to be much like him. But I spoke with Josh a lot about how he wanted my terminator to be. I think that the way we're going to make my terminator the most advanced model so far is in her human traits. She's going to be the most human terminator so far, so that's what I'm striving for.

Crave Online: Do you have a guy in real life?

Summer Glau: Yes.

Crave Online: What do you look for in someone?

Summer Glau: I think someone I respect and admire. I like someone who is honest, very low key. Someone who understands what I do.

Crave Online: Is that hard to find, being an actor with a busy schedule?

Summer Glau: I think so. It's hard for me to put up with it. I need somebody who really calms me down and he does. He grounds me.

Crave Online: What was your approach to playing a terminator in the pilot?

Summer Glau: We do, we do. I think it's going to grow. It always grows from a pilot as you get more used to a character and you work through it. I think she's going to become more human as time goes on, as she learns to mimic more and more accurately the humans around her.

Crave Online: Were you a fan before?

Summer Glau: No, not until I booked the job. I hadn't even seen Terminator.

Crave Online: What did you think when you finally did?

Summer Glau: I was more intimidated than ever. What struck me the most about the movie is I knew the action. I knew the image of Terminator and more or less what it was about. It's this huge action movie but what I was most impressed with was the humanity and the relationships in the movie and how touching it was, how vulnerable Linda was and how human Arnold was at times. He made me cry.

Crave Online: How did you avoid the Terminator films growing up?

Summer Glau: You know, I'm embarrassed. My dad was just shocked and my sisters had seen them too. I don't know how that happened but I did have a crush on Eddie Furlong. I had a picture of him in my room.

Crave Online: What did you know him from then if not Terminator 2?

Summer Glau: I just read all those teen magazines. I read every interview there was with him and always thought he was special.

Crave Online: What do you think of Thomas Dekker as John Connor?

Summer Glau: I think Thomas is perfect for the part and I have to say the first time I read with him when we auditioned with him, I read with a lot of different guys and I think Thomas really has all the right elements to play this role.

Crave Online: How are you preparing for the physicality of the role?

Summer Glau: I always work out for all my roles but particularly for this one. I practice with my BB gun in my house. Our stunt coordinator for the pilot, Joel Kramer, took me to the shooting range all the time and I've practiced a lot with different kinds of guns. That's fun for me. It's very different from River. I'm not doing any martial arts. Cameron is just brute force.

Crave Online: You've done this before too, so you're an old pro.

Summer Glau: Somewhat. I've done a lot of action. I love it. It's really fun. Being a ballet dancer, I'm already very physical in the way that I act so it's been a really good fit for me.

Crave Online: How do you compare Cameron to River?

Summer Glau: Well, I was just so excited to play this kind of character because in a way she's much like River in that she's isolated and she's different from the other characters in how she relates and how she communicates. But she's very strong and she can't genuinely feel emotion. River, that's what she was all about. She was just a jumble of emotions. I was really, really excited that Josh gave me the opportunity to try this role and that's something that is going to be the most challenging part about her, I think, is that I want people to be able to relate to her and in some way see themselves in her just like I try with all my characters.

Crave Online: Are you going to get to explore a terminator in high school?

Summer Glau: Why, yes, we are. We do in the pilot.

Crave Online: Will that continue?

Summer Glau: I think so, from what I've been told. I hope so. I think it's going to always be very complicated for us to stay in one place so I think that's going to be really fun. I think there's a lot of comedy there.

Crave Online: Yeah, how does a terminator handle high school?

Summer Glau: Well, we're going to find out. It's kind of going to be like me going to high school. I never went to high school in real life so it's a completely foreign place for me. We were shooting in Albuquerque and I was really nervous being in the high school with all the high school kids. I'd never done that before.

Crave Online: I think we'd all like to have had a terminator.

Summer Glau: Yeah, I know. Well, I'll do the best we can.

Crave Online: Because it's a female form, will the show explore the potential of a romance with John?

Summer Glau: I love the idea. I'm not sure. The scene that Josh wrote for me to audition with is a scene where Cameron talks about John and about the future when she first meets him. It's the most beautiful scene and I actually cry in the scene. I talk about how

John rescued me and how I feel about John even though Cameron doesn't "feel." It's amazing, it's very complicated but she does love him in her own way and admires him and worships him. He is her reason for being and so I think it already is a romance in some way.

Crave Online: So this terminator cries?

Summer Glau: I cried in my audition when I got the role. I did. I cried.

Crave Online: But they're using that as a function of this new model?

Summer Glau: I think so. I think Josh can really do a lot with it. I'm excited about it. I couldn't believe I was crying. I've cried in almost all of the auditions that I booked and it makes me feel so vulnerable. When you go in in front of the executives and you cry. I thought maybe with Cameron I wouldn't, but sure enough, I did.

Crave Online: Imagine a teenage boy might try with a female model?

Summer Glau: What do you mean? What are you talking about? [Laughs]

Crave Online: Does it go there?

Summer Glau: That would be a Josh question too. I'm not sure about that.

Taken from CraveOnline's website:

http://www.craveonline.com/articles/scifi/04649435/summer_glau_is_the_terminator.html