

Fantastic fan-favorite Kristin Kreuk previews new series 'Murder in a Small Town'

BEHIND THE SCREENS WITH JOSHUA MALONI

In much the same way her character, Lana Lang, stole the heart of one Clark Kent, Kristin Kreuk stole TV viewers' hearts when she starred on the much-loved "Smallville."

It's less ironic, then, that, just as the fictionalized girl next door grew up, developed powers and set out to conquer the world (or, at least its villains), so, too, the Canadian actress would evolve, master her craft, and triumph over her dominion (or, at least its pilot seasons).

From "Smallville," Kreuk would nerd-out in a guest-starring arc on "Chuck" before going on to star in "Beauty and the Beast" and "Burden of Truth." In each role – as a tech geek, a butt-kicking detective, and a justice-seeking lawyer, Kreuk was the center of our attention. She created a through line in which each character was comfortable, yet demanding our respect – the person we'd love to hang out with, or call when in need of a fierce defender.

These qualities carry over into Kreuk's new role on "Murder in a Small Town," that of librarian Cassandra – whom the network calls the "muse, foil and romantic interest" to sheriff Karl Alberg (Rossif Sutherland – Kiefer's half-brother, and the late Donald's son).

In the new hour-long drama, dead bodies unexpectedly start to populate the quiet, picturesque coastal town. Alberg, though a somewhat socially awkward single parent, is a brilliant mind when it comes to cracking cases. Still, there's something about this community, and its players, that will require Cassandra's help.

"Murder in a Small Town" is based on the Edgar Award-win-



Kristin Kreuk and Rossif Sutherland are poised to be the breakout duo of the new fall season. (Photo by James Dimmock/ FOX // ©2024 Fox Media LLC)

ning, nine-book "Karl Alberg" series by L.R. Wright. It is a suspenseful, playful, intriguing series fans of the mystery genre will definitely enjoy and set their DVR to record each week.

"It's called 'Murder in a Small Town' for a reason: There is a murder almost every episode – but not every episode," Kreuk said. "It is mostly whodunit, although there are some whydunit aspects to it, as well. We're always looking into the psychology of these characters."

"It takes place in a gorgeous part of British Columbia ... it is ocean and beaches and beautiful trees and mountains, and it's gorgeous. And there's a love story at its heart. And I think people can expect to come in and become really familiar with this cast of characters and grow to like them a lot, and also get excitement from solving crimes and learning about why people are doing these crimes."

"And every episode, on the whole, we have a wonderful guest star, or multiple guest stars, from people like James Cromwell and Stana Katic to Noah Reid, who is a brilliant actor, and Erica Durance. There's so many wonderful things for people to tune into."

One of those things is the on-screen chemistry between Kreuk and Sutherland – as evidenced by an early scene they share at the town diner.

"I've been really lucky when it comes to this, with every actor I've worked with, like every kind of love relationship on a show that I've worked with. I have been so lucky to be able to fall into a lovely dynamic with the other actor very quickly. And each relationship has a different quality and a different consistency," Kreuk said.

"And I will say that scene, that date scene, is the first scene that we shot of the show, and we just went into a room, and Milan (Cheylov), who directed it, gave

us ultimate freedom. I am an actor who's been doing this a long time. I am very conscious of technique. I am conscious of where my hands go, what I'm doing, making sure continuity works. And he forced me to just not care about it, which is really, really hard for me to do. I've just been trained to do that. He gave freedom in that space ... freedom to just play.

"He wanted us to do it slightly differently every time, just to kind of move with the flow. And I think that we were just lucky in that Rossif and I have similar sensibilities and felt very at ease with each other, so that we could find it."

Unlike, say, nine out of every 10 shows, this series doesn't have a "will they or won't they," at least not initially. Now, as far as the crimefighting aspect of this thing goes, Cassandra is Karl's muse – but will she also be helping him solve these mysteries on a regular basis?

"Yeah, it's a good question – and it's something that I thought about a lot, too, at the beginning of this. Like, what role does Cassandra play in this? Apart from, you know, relating with Karl," Kreuk said. "The first season, I'm kind of thankful that I'm not getting into crime-solving with everybody. It doesn't feel quite authentic. We're trying to keep it a little more realistic. But she'll be involved in those stories in a variety of ways. She's been a member of this community for a long time. She knows a lot of the people in the community. She knows the people who maybe are being accused of committing crimes or who have committed crimes. She is also somebody that Karl cares about. So, there is a point in the season where she may be under threat. There are things like that that come up."

"But it's nice, because, for me as an actor, it's nice because I'm often not a part of the crime storyline, and it's such a joy to be able to play outside of that, because I've done it. I've done it many times, and it's just a different acting muscle. And not being involved in those stories a lot allows me to do something else entirely."

For Kreuk, though she's been a part of many successful projects, her fans are still most passionate about her time in rural Kansas.

"I've been doing a lot of conventions, and ... what I hear about 'Smallville,' especially, 'This is a show I watched with my dad.' 'This is a show I watched with my grandparents.' 'This is a show, now, that I watch with my kids.'"

"I have kids that come up who are named Lana. I have kids that come up who are passionate about the show, who just want to talk about it, because their parent introduced them to it; because it's on streaming now. And so, I really get to talk about family connections the most, and about the meaning of these shows to people, to their hearts."

"It's so gratifying to know that I've been a part of things that have allowed people to either connect to individuals in their lives – sometimes the only way they knew how to connect – or to have peace when things were hard. Being a being a part of a comfort show is a real blessing."

"There was a point in my career, in my life, I may have, like, pooh-poohed the whole thing. Growing up in the '90s, we were very strict about our selling out (laughs). But now, I really do not have those judgments, and I feel really blessed."

"Murder in a Small Town" premieres Tuesday, Sept. 24 (8-9:30 p.m. ET/PT) on FOX.

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