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Young actress lands role in made-for-TV movie



Five-year-old Sydney Cross works with John Stamos in Lifetime network film

By Joanna Phillips
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

More than anything else, five-year-old Sydney Cross loves people.

And with her enigmatic personality, it's easy for people to love her too.

She has been winning over hearts in auditions, and recently landed a role in a made-for-TV movie, *The Two Mrs. Kissels*, to air on the Lifetime network. Emmy award-winning actor John Stamos will play one of the lead characters, Andrew Kissel.

Sydney, who lives in Milton with her parents, just wrapped up Junior Kindergarten at the Montessori School of Milton.

So tender, and already she has worked with the bigwigs in Mr. Magorium's *Wonder Emporium*. The film starred Dustin Hoffman and Natalie Portman and shooting began in Spring 2006, when Sydney was three years old.

But the acting bug caught on even earlier.

Family and friends kept telling her mom, Jodi Cross, that she should be in commercials.

Sydney wasn't just cute — she was precocious. It was enough to convince Cross that her daughter was gifted.

Carolyn's Model and Talent in Toronto was quick to pick her up.

Sydney's been with the agency since she was a year old.

Cross says, "Without them (the agency), we wouldn't have any of the excitement we have going on right now."

Her agent, Kristin Finley, recommended her for the role in *The Two Mrs. Kissels*, and Sydney wasn't about to disappoint.

After all, it's clear that Sydney is well poised to charm directors and producers.

At just over three feet and 33 pounds, she's small for her age. But what she lacks in size, she more than makes up for in charisma. Not that her size has presented any issues; in fact, it has allowed her to play a character younger than herself.

Cross describes Sydney as "very, very outgoing, very friendly, (and) very dramatic."

Sydney has loved going to auditions from the very beginning.

Says Cross, "She mostly has fun playing with the other kids."

She auditions for roles in print and commercials, in addition to movies.

What does she like most about acting?

"Well, saying things," she answers deftly.

Sydney has had an avid interest in dinosaurs for more than a year and can remember everything about them.

That said, it doesn't look like she'll have any problems remembering her lines. And lines she will have as she's set to appear in a couple of scenes.

Sydney has been cast as three-year-old Mary Kissel, one of Robert Kissel's kids.

The Two Mrs. Kissels is based on the true story of two brothers, Robert one of them, murdered three years apart.

Robert, an American investment banker in Hong Kong, was murdered in 2003. His wife, Nancy Kissel, plied him with a milkshake containing sedatives, and bludgeoned him to death with a statue after he lost consciousness. She's now serving a life sentence in a Thailand prison, the word 'Lifer' scrawled outside her seven-by-seven-foot cell.

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In 2006, Robert Kissel's brother, Andrew, was stabbed to death in Greenwich, Connecticut. His murder remains unsolved, but his estranged wife, Hayley Wolff Kissel, has come under public scrutiny.

Filming of *The Two Mrs. Kissels* started earlier in June.

Although Sydney's involvement in this heavy film will no doubt help to shape her acting career, her dreams may take her elsewhere.

She would like to be a "singing dentist" when she grows up.

For now, she enjoys skating, dance, gymnastics, Kindermusik, and of course, acting.

BUDDING ACTRESS: Sydney Cross is all smiles since being picked for the movie *The Two Mrs. Kissels*.

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