



Rebecca Blumhagen is a remarkably versatile and expressive actor, writer and filmmaker, equally adept on the stage and screen, tackling a large variety of material ranging from comedy to drama.

She can currently be seen starring as "Sam" in the HBO/Cinemax breakout series THE GIRL'S GUIDE TO DEPRAVITY based on Heather Rutman's cult blog of the same name. Season 2, which premiered this past September, centers on Sam and her struggle to rewrite the rules after she's abandoned by lifelong best friend, Lizzie. Blumhagen was a member of the writing team for Season 2, lending her unique voice and humor to the series and even composing one of the featured songs.

SHAKEFIRE (SF):

Any hints you can give us on where the storyline is going this year?

REBECCA BLUMHAGEN (RB):

Well, right at the beginning of the season you see Sam's world blown apart, and a lot of new characters enter (or re-enter) her life. In a quick succession of events the strong defining forces around her disappear and she's forced to re-evaluate everything - who she is, what she wants, how she feels about the rules, what her voice is - and if she even has a voice. We get to watch her grow into a leader of sorts (if a somewhat underqualified one) as she delves into woodworking classes, invents new diets and exercise regimens, and in the process of seeing how the rules start to affect the people around her, starts to rewrite them.

SF:

The show has garnered a lot of international attention, especially in Latin America. Any insight as to why you think that might be?

RB:

We've been lucky to get a lot of attention in all the markets we've played in (I love hearing from people all over the world! Spain, Japan, Peru...) and I think the influx of attention from Latin America has mostly to do with the fact that the show has just recently entered the market there. Maybe it also has something to do with a cultural affirmation of fiery, take-no-prisoner, cut-your-balls-off-if-you-cross them women... but that's just conjecture :). There's also some great physical comedy in the show, which translates well cross-culturally. We're always breaking stuff, flipping over couches, drinking each other under the table, throwing pens...

SF:

What has been your favorite scene to film so far?

RB:

In episode two, right after Lizzie drops the news she's taking off to bum around Europe with some guy (breaking ALL of our rules), there's a great dream sequence where Sam finds herself alone in a graveyard, in the rain with a tattered umbrella, staring at a grave with Lizzie's name on it, unable to speak. At the sound stages in Romania where we shoot most of our show, they created this amazing, creepy old graveyard. On that night, it was actually cold and rainy... so walking onto that set, with the fog machines, the graves, in that creaky cavernous old sound stage... really felt like movie magic. I also feel incredibly lucky to have some old friends of mine on the show with me. Jesse Liebman (Jason), Nicole Rodenburg (Amy), Jeff Takacs (Blair), Nick Stevenson (Stan) and Blake Lowell (Charlie) are all people I've known either from other plays or movies where we've worked together, or from studying with the same acting teacher in New York (Michael Howard). They're all insanely talented and we are lucky to have them. And, especially on the kind of schedule we shoot on, it's such a gift to walk into a scene with someone I have real history with. It helps give the show that sense of familiarity - so the audience is walking into a world that has existed for a long time.

SF:

What are key areas in which you can relate to Samantha?

RB:

Her determination, her commitment to figuring life out, her ferocity in the face of adversity... those awkward, quirky moments where Sam is totally, transparently out of place - those are all very me.



And the presence of hope, despite her succession of mistakes - that's also me. Also, I've never actually invented a kind of exercise based on a weird caveman philosophy... but that sounds like something I would do. :)

SF:

You have written a few episodes this year. How did that come about?

RB:

Well I had a ton of ideas going into Season 2, and I'm so grateful that the producers and our director loved and embraced them and really encouraged my involvement. They involved me in all the development conversations, and I got to brainstorm with the writers, our director, and with the show's creator, Heather Rutman, from the day that we got the news that Season 2 had been picked up. Megan, Jenna, and Amy, the new women this season, all came out of brainstorm sessions we had. Writing isn't new to me; I've been a writer for longer than I've been an actor, so being involved not just on the idea level but in really creating scenes that find the comedy from the heart of these great characters we came up with was beyond rewarding. I submitted some of my ideas (some of them anonymously) and everyone was impressed, including the writers, so I got to jump on board. In the end I got to write a ton of material that ended up in the show (not just the episodes I'm credited on), and watching which ideas got picked up and expanded and which got left on the cutting room floor was an incredible experience. I'm really grateful that I was able to lend my creative voice to the process, and I can't say enough how much I appreciate that that voice was encouraged and embraced. We had some other great new women writers on the team this season, Rebecca Coale and Jessica Massa, and it was really fun to add more of that authentic, fresh, contemporary female perspective to our show. They wrote a dating book called "The Gaggle" that required them to travel around the country to interview hundreds of women on their dating experiences, so they had a lot of real life ideas and situations in their creative vault. We really wanted our show to continue in that direction this season - a comedy (heightened, ridiculous situations) but stuff that comes out of real dating stories, in the modern world, where you have to deal with things like getting broken up with over gchat.

SF:

Any plans of writing more episodes or features in the future?

RB:

I'd be honored to! I write every day, and have several projects in various stages of development. I also get to shoot and edit videos for a design blog called Apartment Therapy when I'm not acting, so I get to meet people and encounter new ideas all the time. Translating that stuff in the edit into interesting little episodes about home-related stuff is great experience that can only make me a stronger writer. I am and will continue to be grateful for all the work I'm able to do to bring each quirky, individual, beautiful human story to life!

SF:

You have a busy schedule ahead of you this year. Any plans for a break in the near future?

RB:

I have a fantasy life in which I spend my days running and biking along the Hudson, writing in coffee shops, taking cello lessons, making projects with my friends, and hanging out with kids and old people. Oh wait. That is my life. Who needs a break from that?

SF:

Have you written any episodes that didn't make the cut?

RB:

Ha, yes, of course, there's a bunch of stuff that didn't make it. There was a version of Ep 201 which had Tyler (Joe Komara)'s little sister drop out of high school and move in with Lizzie. His unflagging support of the girls got totally reversed when his little sister started following in their footsteps. Then there was a version of Sam that just started hooking up with a bunch of guys after she breaks up with Jason to try and get over him, including an accidental drunken hookup with Lizzie's dad, who she meets in a bar and doesn't find out is Lizzie's dad until later (WTF!). That was funny and sort of



classic in the Shakespearean identity-mix-up sense, and classic in the Sam-trying-to-follow-a-rule-and-totally-fucking-it-up sense. There was also a bunch of paleo/carb stuff as you watch Sam and Jason unravel that got cut, which would have been funny, but that we just didn't have time for. Thanks so much for these great questions, and for watching our show!

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