



Ruth Connell.
Photo by Ben Cope

On the cover

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Ruth Connell.

From motherhood's surprises to revisiting iconic characters in new contexts, Ruth Connell reflects on her ever-evolving career as an actress. In this conversation, she delves into her approach to characters, the impact of audience connection, and the journey of self-discovery that comes with a life dedicated to the craft. We learn about the meticulous preparation that informs her performances, the unexpected validation that comes from a crew member's nod, and the unwavering passion that keeps her returning to the stage and screen.



V: Ruth, it's a genuine pleasure to have you here today. Congratulations on becoming a mother recently - that must be an incredible experience!

R: It's the role of a lifetime! I'm still learning my part and it seems to involve a lot of improvisation.

V: Your role in "Dead Boy Detectives" sounds fascinating. You're revisiting the character of the Night Nurse, but within a completely different context. How has your approach to the character evolved from "Doom Patrol" to this new series?

R: My approach is always similar (at the risk of sounding a bit much) in that I treat every part with the same curiosity and fastidiousness as if I were doing Tennessee Williams or Shakespeare. Even if in Doom Patrol it was to race across a field in the middle of the night like a ferocious spider! In "Dead Boys" it was so helpful from our Showrunner's that we were given all the scripts in advance to really delve into. In Dead Boy Detectives, the Night Nurse may have retained some of her initial character traits but with a more seemingly human countenance.

V: It sounds like you're drawn to characters with depth and layers, beyond the initial impression. What is it about these complex characters that resonates with you as an actress?

R: I think there are many layers to most people and I'm fascinated by people. I've been trying to work them out my whole life....

V: And it's clear that your portrayal of such characters resonates with audiences. You've cultivated a dedicated fan base over the years. How does that connection with your audience shape your approach to your craft?

R: The connection to the Supernatural audience lit-

erally made me take even more care of the details as the fans notice every nuance. It will be interesting to see with Dead Boy Detectives what it's like to engage with the Neil Gaiman audience too. I come from a theatre background and get a lot out of live question and answers when meeting fans at conventions, where you get reactions in real time as well as online.

V: Have there ever been moments where external validation for a project differed from your own sense of accomplishment? How do you navigate these instances where perspectives on success might differ, and how does that fuel your continued artistic growth?

R: I'm still surprised I didn't annoy people more with Rowena initially! It was a lovely surprise how well she was received. It's also a great lesson in ego to shoot a tv show, then let go of how it appears once edited etc. as you can't control most of what happens, unless you are a producer. It's also interesting in the industry how genre work isn't regarded as highly perhaps as other types, so I am keen to explore other realms and see how I do!

V: It's evident that you approach acting with a deep sincerity and a passion for exploring the human condition. Beyond the characters you portray, what are some of the biggest lessons you've learned on your journey as an artist?

R: That it's all the same - life, acting, being. You can only go from where you are. So sometimes the wind is behind you mood wise for a certain situation in a scene. There's also technique so you can be in the right ballpark for the work whatever is going on in life - just as in life we have ways of coping with what it throws at us. It all comes down to being present with what is. And having understood the circumstances.

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- RUTH CONNELL

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V: We've talked about your roles and how audiences connect with your work. But I'd love to shift inward for a moment. Was there a specific time, maybe a particular role or experience, where acting evolved from being something you did into something that truly became a part of your identity?

R: I was a dancer before I was an actor. It's taken me a long time to feel like I really was 'an actor'. I've always had to prove everything to myself that I wanted to do or be good at. I have earned every piece of confidence I might have! So now, even if I'm not as good as I hoped I might be or I have a bad day, I allow myself that I'm an artist whatever is going on - because I go on trying to do what I love to do regardless of outcome. I think it's only happening now that I feel it is a large part of my identity - although I've been on stage in one way or another

er for 40 years and it's clearly always been part of me. I'm probably just a bit Scottish about it!

V: As we wrap up our conversation, I'd love to delve into your unique perspective on respect within the acting industry. We've talked about various aspects of your journey, and it's clear that artistic integrity and personal fulfillment play a key role. Beyond the professional accolades, what truly defines and resonates with you as an artist when it comes to earning respect from your colleagues and collaborators?

R: On set or in rehearsal, when you do a take and it feels like something real was exchanged or captured that then adds something to what's being created as a whole, it's the best feeling in the world. If the boom operator nods or scripty laughs, I'm at peace with the world.



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