

STEP INTO MY PARLOUR



By Shaun Proulx

SHAUN PROULX TALKS TO LINDA EVANS

'Linda Evans, there's a spill in aisle nine!'



In spoofing the woman best known as Krystle Carrington, the prime-time animated series *Family Guy* once implied in an episode that **Linda Evans**, unable to work well with others, couldn't land a post-*Dynasty* acting gig to save her life, forcing her to the drudgery of working in a grocery store.

Of course, neither implication couldn't be further from the truth. Meeting Evans is to understand right away why, over two decades ago, it was her whom *Dynasty* producers cast in the archetypal role of good girl in a world of rich evil bitches. Evans is disarmingly serene, giving off an attractive contented energy you simply don't find every day. That she would be difficult to work with is

impossible to imagine.

As for her inability to land a post-*Dynasty* gig, following the intensity of exposure brought on by the über-soap, the last thing Evans – once married to film producer John Derek and having appeared in *Playboy* twice - wanted when she left was more time in the spotlight. In a relationship at the time with New Age musician Yanni, Evans said good-bye Hollywood, where she'd been a mainstay since her gig opposite future *Dynasty* husband John Forsythe in *The Big Valley* in the sixties.

But as Evans told me when we sat down together at the Royal Alexandra Theatre - where she's back cat fighting again with Joan Collins after twenty-five years in *Legends* - life didn't come to an end when *Dynasty* did. In fact, it was the simple things – like the freedom to gain a little weight – that she found herself delighting in for the first time ever. We talked about her exit from Hollywood, what made her say yes to *Legends*, and her nerves about treading the boards for the very first time.



On the recent *Dynasty* TV reunion, you said the show was an amazing life experience. Understandably, but has anything ever topped that since?



Well, life is great. I don't think you have to do a *Dynasty* to have an amazing life. But it was one of the highlights of my life so far for sure. Something not that many people get to experience; it was amazing.



Did you learn anything from it?



It taught me that ... (*Considers.*) Which thing do I want to say? It taught me that you can't find yourself through other people.



When it all came to an end, were you over the hyper-high-profile life?



Well that's one of the reasons I moved from California.



To Washington State.



Yes. I wanted to have a life. Because it's an unreal world, that world. And I'm thrilled for every minute of it, but you really can't define yourself by that. Because, like in this play (*Legends*), you're lost without it. And it's a dead-end. It's not where you're going to find your joy; it's temporary.



So what has your life become?



I went to a spiritual school and studied with a teacher for years. And found some of the things I was looking for outside of me and inside of me.



Is this the Ramtha School of Enlightenment?



Yes.



Well I have to say that sitting with you, you actually do give off quite a peaceful and calm vibe; it's really noticeable.



It's a beautiful school, just a beautiful school.



Speaking of beautiful, you made dozens of 'Most Beautiful' lists during the *Dynasty* years. What kind of pressure does that put on a person?



(Laughs and throws up her hands.) Tons! Tons and tons! And that's why when *Dynasty* was over I moved to Washington and gained twenty-five pounds. I just had a ball. I ate, I stayed up too late, I did everything I'd never ever done in my life. I'd never gained more than four pounds in my life and when I tried to lose it, I didn't know what to do. I was like, 'Oh, my god!' *(Laughs.)* 'How do you get rid of this?'



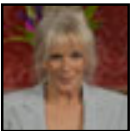
So the phone rings and you hear about *Legends*. What was your instant thought?



Nolan Miller called me.



***Dynasty's* costume designer, Mister Shoulder Pads.**



(Laughs.) Oh, god. Shoulder pads. I just love Nolan, so I said, 'Okay, I'll read this play,' but I thought 'There's no way in the world I'm doing a play. No way, no way, no way.'



Because this is your first time on stage, ever.



(Laughs.) Yes, my first play. I read it out of respect for Nolan. And was just stunned. I just loved it. I thought it was such fun, and I thought, 'Oh, my god, I don't know if I can say no to this. I'd be jealous if someone else went and did it.'



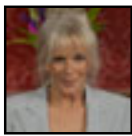
Did you know Joan was going to be in it?



Yes, I did know Joan had agreed. Absolutely. It was just a question if I was wanting to take something on. And I must say, *(Laughs.)* I've taken something on!



Opening night is creeping up. How are you feeling?



Scared! Are you kidding? This is the giant unknown. This is something I avoided for fifty years.



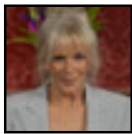
How does *Legends'* Leatrice differ from *Dynasty's* Krystle?



She's stronger. Much stronger than Krystle. And can hold her own. She's covert, she's not obvious in anything that she does.



You once said, 'It's almost as if my life is just beginning and I intend to have forty more years of fun.' Do you remember saying that?



Yes. And I can tell you as time goes on I'm getting happier and happier, so something is working in my life for me. And I feel a lot freer to do things and fail at it and not worry about what people think of it, and just enjoy life. It's a lot more fun now than when I was younger.



Finish the sentence: 'Linda Evans was _____.'



(Considers.) Linda Evans was gone ... but now she's back.

