

## Jacob Anderson x Man About Town

"I don't think I had any preconceived notions on whether it would be a success, but I just knew that I loved it. It just seduced me immediately." Anderson joyfully recalls. "I was only aware of the books in passing, so I didn't know, initially, how passionate the fanbase was."

Seductive, sultry and gloriously blood-laden, AMC's adaptation of Anne Rice's revered book series *'Interview with the Vampire'*, refuses to restrain itself. In a vast improvement from the cult nineteen ninety-four film of the same name, the new episodic treatment of Rice's story allows viewers to fully examine the inner psyche of a vampire's life and dig deeper into the burdensome nature of an immortal being. "Throughout the series, you slowly take away layers and memory starts to come into question, and more layers get revealed. It's really examining, that when your skins' all gone, what's that raw stuff underneath it?"

In the show, Anderson takes on the role of Louis de Pointe Du Lac, a former closeted brothel proprietor in 1910 New Orleans, who undergoes a traumatic-yet-tantalising transformation. Despite originating from twentieth-century America, viewers are first introduced to Louis in modern day Dubai, as he documents his volatile life as a vampire to journalist Daniel Malloy (Eric Bogosian). Portraying a character whose story spans centuries could seem like a daunting task to some, however, Anderson relished the opportunity to connect with his deliciously tortured, onscreen counterpart. "I have some similarities with Louis, I also carry a lot of guilt and shame myself [laughs]. The cool thing about Louis is that he's complex, he's not one thing or another, so with characters like that they reveal things to you slowly, both about yourself and about people, there are things I thought about Louis in the beginning that have completely changed now. It's rare and a privilege to have a character like that."

Fearlessly ripping up the homoerotic subtext from the novels, AMC's version is an unashamedly and unflinching queer love story. Throughout season one, viewers were utterly enthralled and beguiled by the sexually-charged relationship between Anderson and his screen partner Sam Reid, who played the alluringly sadistic French aristocrat, Lestat de Lioncourt. Together the duo ignited the screen with passion and fervour, as they both conducted devilishly dark acts of love for one another. However, like all illustrious love stories of the supernatural nature, the relationship took an unexpected dark turn, when Louis seemingly took Lestat's life during the heated climax of the season one finale. Starring without his on screen partner for season two was a particular challenge for Anderson, but one that also manifested an exciting opportunity to further analyse Louis as an independent character.. "It was definitely different, in season one it felt like mine and Sam's partnership in the programme, is what drove the story. It was a real gift to be able to tell this story with someone you trust and who trusts you back. Losing that in season two was challenging in its own way, but it was an opportunity to see Louis as a vampire outside of that relationship - it was fun!"

Initially unburdened by the acclaim the book series held when he first signed on, Anderson remained resolute in keeping fan expectations at bay when reprising the character for season two "I had to keep reminding myself, we're there to tell a story. We couldn't keep thinking about how people were going to take it or what the size of the show is. You'd be thinking about the wrong things as well, you'd be thinking about how you looked. You'll see in season two there were moments where I was not thinking about what I looked like! [laughs]"

Of course, Anderson is no stranger to the laser-sharp focus, that fanatical and feverish book readers have, when anticipating a screen adaptation of their favourite stories. Privy to the highly intense fan reactions during his time on prestige fantasy drama *'Game of Thrones'*, Anderson develop a mechanism that kept him focused on the project at hand. "My way of seeing it is always, just keep it small. Keep it as small as you possibly can in your own mind. My experience with *Game of Thrones* for the most part was me and five other people working on this thing, yeah we got to shoot on these massive sets, but everyone knew each other so it was small and intimate. We were telling Daenerys' story, it was Emilia's show in my mind for that whole time."

As a man who asserts that the word "geek" is a badge of honour, Anderson is entirely understanding when it comes to indulging in a particular obsession, as he fondly discusses being

enamoured by the silver screen and the essential escapism it offers. "I think have an obsessive personality. I love going to the cinema, it's my safe place and it's the place I am happiest other than being with my family. I'll go watch a film and then go and find out everything about it, who made, why they made it and even if didn't like the film, I'd want to understand why and what did I miss about it. I was really into comic books as a teenager and I used to know a lot about music, but now I've fallen off."

Speaking of music, Anderson recently reconnected with his musical persona Raleigh Richie and re-released his debut album '*You're A Man Now, Boy*' on limited edition vinyl. "We released it at the literally the first opportunity that we could, there's been a bunch of legal stuff with rights, where we couldn't print any more vinyls. So there reason that we did it, is because we could [laughs]. I kept seeing copies of the vinyl, selling for ridiculous amounts of money and I don't like that. I wanted to democratise that a little bit more." Encompassed in the announcement of the re-release, Anderson also hinted at debuting some previously unheard music later in the year. "Releasing demos goes back to me obsessing on how things are made and wanting to know the stories behind things. I just like the idea of letting people into that process a little bit, and showing them things that were almost on the album, so felt like a good idea to do a little check up in that way."

As an unwritten rule, Anderson has released a new album every four years, since his debut back in twenty-sixteen. Considering his last album '*Andy*' hit the shelves in twenty-twenty, anticipation for a third Raleigh Richie album is naturally building. "I tend to work best, when I do lock myself into a space and just do it. I'll do that at some point this year, I'm also putting ideas into my phone and there are always ideas swimming around in my head. It will be a case of locking down in the studio for a week."

Despite his self-confessed workaholic nature and eagerness to dive into recording new music, fans might have to expertise their patience, as Anderson is somewhat conflicted on whether he'll find time to get back into the studio this year. He explains; "I've also got busy summer, I've got a three year old who'll be on summer holidays and I want to see my family. I barely saw my family last year because I was in Prague a lot of the year, so I want to be as present as I can be. I also have a work problem. I just want to make shit. I'm realising that's my mode, I want to make stuff with good people, who are kind. So who knows what will happen this year."

Aside from his highly anticipated return in '*Interview with the Vampire*', one thing we can certainly expect from Anderson this year, is a standout role in '*Timestalker*', a hilariously dubbed 'British historical, sci-fi rom-com' written and directed by the unique visionary, Alice Lowe. Anderson expresses his excitement, sharing, "It's a wild film! It's also so funny. I've been a fan of Alice Lowe for such a long time, she's one of the unsung heroes of British comedy, and specifically with her dark sensibility that she has and her awkwardness, nobody else taps into as well as she does. It's just mad, that's the best way I can describe it without giving anything away."