

Abigail Cowen reflects on the emotional weight of ‘Every Summer After’, the responsibility of adapting beloved books, the legacy of ‘Fate: The Winx Saga’ and the quiet discipline required to survive an industry built on opinion.



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CALOR

Abigail Cowen

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Abigail Cowen: “You have to learn to disconnect from both criticism and praise”

Some love stories are written to speak about two people. Others, almost without trying, end up speaking about everything that happens between a farewell and a reunion: the memories we keep editing, the people we used to be, and the wounds that quietly shape the adults we become. **‘Every Year After’**, the new **Prime Video** adaptation of **Carley Fortune’s** bestselling novel **‘Every Summer After’**, belongs unmistakably to that second category. Beyond romance, the series explores how time alters memory, how adolescence continues to echo through adulthood, and how forgiveness can become the only possible way forward.

At the centre of that emotional landscape is **Abigail Cowen**, an actress who has moved between fantasy, horror, period drama and romance, yet seems consistently drawn to women who reveal themselves slowly. After becoming one of the most recognisable faces of **‘Fate: The Winx Saga’**, she now steps into one of the most restrained roles of her career as **Delilah**, a woman who has spent years pretending that everything is under control.

Speaking to **Xmag**, Cowen reflects on the fear of disappointing readers, the difficulty of building a character across two timelines, and the need to protect oneself in an industry where public opinion often arrives before the work has even had time to breathe. Calm, thoughtful and unusually precise when speaking about her craft, she seems far more interested in understanding people than in judging them.

Curiously, Cowen did not initially know she was auditioning for an adaptation of **‘Every Summer After’**. During casting, the project was working under a code name and the scenes she received gave little away about the wider story. It was only at the final stage that she discovered she was being considered for a character already deeply loved by readers.

“When I discovered that it was ‘Every Summer After’, I bought the book immediately. I fell in love with the romance, but especially with the

way the story keeps moving between the past and the present. I thought it was a beautiful way of understanding why the characters make certain decisions as adults.”

That constant movement between two timelines is one of the series’ strongest devices. The audience does not meet the characters in a neat, linear way. Instead, we see who they have become before fully understanding what happened to them. For Cowen, that structure was essential because it created empathy rather than judgement.

“I think Amy B. Harris did a beautiful job of creating empathy. First, we see who these people are now, and then we understand what happened to them in order for them to become that way.”

There is a particular responsibility that comes with adapting a beloved novel. Every reader has already imagined the characters: their faces, their voices, their silences, even the way they move through a room. For an actor, the challenge is not to reproduce every individual fantasy, but to create a version that feels emotionally truthful on screen.

Carley Fortune, however, chose not to hover over the process. Far from controlling every decision, the author gave the showrunner and cast room to interpret the story. Cowen admits that this surprised her.

“If I had written a book like that, I would probably have been a helicopter parent. Carley, however, completely trusted Amy and the actors. I thought that was incredibly generous.”
That generosity did not remove the pressure. If anything, it made it more meaningful. Cowen knew she had to honour the spirit of the book while allowing **Delilah** to exist as a living, breathing person rather than an exact replica of someone else’s imagination.

“You have to give yourself permission to create your own version of the character.”

“As an actress, you have to train your mind to transform that pressure into an honour. You are creating your own version of the character, and you have to give yourself permission to do that. It is impossible to look exactly like the image every reader has created in their head.”

On the surface, **Delilah** appears composed, elegant and even slightly unreachable. She knows how to control what people see. But that control is also a kind of armour. Beneath

it lies a woman marked by fear, guilt and the exhausting need to maintain the illusion that everything is fine. For Cowen, understanding what **Delilah** refused to say became more important than the dialogue itself.

“I understood that she was hiding from a lot of demons in her life. She needed everything to look perfect from the outside, even though inside everything was crumbling.”

Cowen approached the character through empathy, not judgement. **Delilah’s** instinct to hide her pain was not necessarily something the actress recognised in herself. In fact, she describes herself as someone far more emotionally open.

“I am much more of a heart-on-my-sleeve person. I probably overshare sometimes. But I completely understood why she behaved that way, and that allowed me to empathise with her choices.”

That tension between concealment and vulnerability became the engine of the performance. **Delilah** is not cold; she is defended. She is not indifferent; she is afraid of what might happen if she allows herself to feel everything at once. The emotional challenge was to show the cost of keeping pain under control for too long.

The technical challenge was just as demanding. The series constantly alternates between two stages of **Delilah’s** life, and the scenes were not shot in chronological order. It was not unusual for Cowen to begin the day playing **Delilah** as a teenager and end it as the adult woman returning years later to the same emotional territory. The transformation could not rely only on hair, make-up or costume. It had to live in the body.

“There was a lot of preparation. I had to think constantly about posture, about the way she walked, about small gestures and body language, so that the audience could feel they were really seeing two different versions of the same person.”

HAT: VYLE SUNGLASSES: DIESEL



**“WAIT FOR NO ONE TO
GIVE YOU THE CHANCE —
CREATE IT, AND TAKE IT.”**



JEWELLERY: DINOSAUR DESIGNS
TOTAL LOOK: CHRISTIAN SIRIANO



During that process, Cowen discovered an unexpected softness in the character. As Delilah begins to lower her guard, something lighter appears: humour, playfulness, the trace of the girl she once was before life taught her to protect herself.

“As Delilah starts to let her guard down, a much more fun and carefree side of her appears. Discovering that part of her was one of the things I enjoyed most during filming.”

Although **‘Every Year After’** is framed as a love story, Cowen believes its emotional centre lies somewhere deeper than romance. The relationship works because it is built on guilt, friendship, memory and the slow, difficult process of forgiveness. The question is not only whether two people can find their way back to each other, but whether they can forgive the versions of themselves who made mistakes.

“I think the great theme is forgiveness. You see all these characters fall apart and, little by little, you understand why they made certain decisions. In the end, they have to learn to forgive themselves and also each other.”

That idea also explains the importance of nostalgia within the series. The summers, the familiar places and the

memories of youth are not there simply to produce longing. They show how certain spaces become part of a person’s emotional architecture. When Cowen is asked whether there is a place she still returns to mentally, she does not hesitate.

“The house where I grew up. That place shaped me, and I still love going back there to be with my family.”

For all the heightened emotion of screen romance, Cowen seems most moved by ordinary places that hold us: a childhood home, a familiar landscape, the feeling of being known before performance entered the picture.

Perhaps that is why she understands the current appetite for stories about first love. They speak to a desire to recover feelings that once seemed absolute.

Still, she is careful not to treat adolescence as something naive or trivial. For Cowen, young audiences are drawn to these stories because they want their emotions to be taken seriously.

“When you are a teenager, everything feels enormous because it really is. Film and television often make fun of young people, but I think audiences now want stories that take them seriously and understand that those experiences can stay with you for the rest of your life.” If one project taught Cowen about the power of an existing fan community, it was undoubtedly **‘Fate: The**

Winx Saga’. Before filming began, she had not fully understood the scale of the fanbase that had grown up with **Bloom**. That changed the day **Netflix** announced the cast.

“That was when my messages filled up with people who had grown up with the character. That was when I truly understood how important she was to so many people.”

Playing **Bloom** became an education in expectation. It taught Cowen that when a character already belongs to an audience, the actor must find a balance between respect and independence. A screen adaptation cannot simply copy what came before; it has to find its own life.

“At first I felt a lot of pressure, but I had to remind myself that I was there to make my own version. It is an adaptation, not an exact copy.”

That lesson has stayed with her, especially in the way she approaches the noise surrounding modern acting. Inevitably, the conversation turns to social media, a space Cowen tries to keep at a distance. She recognises that it is almost impossible to release a project today without receiving an immediate wave of opinions. Yet over time she has learned that protection does not only mean disconnecting from criticism. It also means disconnecting from praise.



DRESS: JASON WU COLLECTION BRACELET: DINOSAUR DESIGNS SMALL BRACELET: LO COLLECTIONS
TIGHTS: FALKE SANDALS: AQUAZZURA



“THERE ARE STORIES WE STILL HAVE NOT TOLD IN THE WAY THEY DESERVE.”



FLOWER PIN: ALEXIS BITTAR SUNGLASSES: PRADA
SKIRT: BIBHU MOHAPATRA COLLAR & BRACELET: ALEXIS BITTAR
LINGERIE: FLEUR DU MAL TIGHTS: FALKE
HEELS: VALENTINO

“I always say that you have to disconnect from the bad, but also from the good. If you give too much weight to praise, criticism eventually becomes even heavier. Everyone is entitled to an opinion, and you have to learn to live with that.”

It is a striking idea in an industry that often measures value through reaction. Cowen does not see social media as entirely negative. She knows that platforms have created opportunities for actors who might once have been excluded from more traditional routes into the business. But she is also clear about the danger of allowing strangers to define one’s confidence.

“If you do not have a strong sense of who you are, it is very easy to allow people who do not even know you to affect your confidence. And confidence is essential when you have to build a character.”

That emotional discipline began before acting became the centre of her life. During her time as a model, Cowen learned early that rejection is rarely personal. In modelling, a decision can be based on a look, a measurement, a campaign, a mood. Acting, however, offered the creative space she had been looking for.

“In modelling, I understood that nothing was personal, but through acting I discovered that I could also bring my own creativity. That was exactly what I had always wanted to do.”

Sport also shaped her relationship with rejection. Having practised sport through much of her childhood, Cowen understood preparation, discipline and resilience. One of her earliest collaborators once told her to approach auditions like matches: prepare, step onto the field, try to score, and accept that missing does not mean the game is over. *“There are so many noes in this profession. Thinking that I had simply lost a match helped me enormously. You would not stop playing football because you missed a goal.”*

It is a philosophy that still accompanies her. She is not searching for one specific genre, nor for a single type of production. Horror, fantasy, romance, drama — for Cowen, the category matters less than the humanity inside it.

“You can tell a deeply human story within horror, fantasy or romance. I am always looking for characters who challenge me and force me to look at the world from another place.”

Before the conversation ends, Cowen reflects on the kinds of stories she still feels are insufficiently represented on screen. While preparing for **‘Redeeming Love’**, she visited shelters for women who had survived sex trafficking, an experience that changed her understanding of that reality. She speaks about it carefully, aware that some stories require protection as much as visibility.

“Hearing their stories changed my life. Many people do not truly understand what these women experience because they need to remain protected. I do not think we have yet told their stories in the way they deserve.”

She would also like to see more stories centred on women holding families together alone, or navigating extraordinary circumstances that are often endured in silence. It is not spectacle that interests her most, nor genre, nor even scale. What Cowen returns to, again and again, is the human being inside the frame.

Perhaps that is why her work feels increasingly defined by restraint rather than display. Whether she is playing a young woman shaped by fantasy, a romantic heroine carrying the weight of the past, or someone haunted by a reality the world prefers not to see, **Abigail Cowen** seems drawn to the same essential question: what is a person hiding, and what might happen if they finally allowed themselves to be known?

In **‘Every Year After’**, that question becomes the quiet pulse of the story. Love matters, but so does memory. Desire matters, but so does forgiveness. And for Cowen, the most interesting characters are rarely the ones who arrive fully explained. They are the ones who ask the audience to look again, to wait a little longer, and to understand that behind every polished surface there may be an entire life trying not to break.