

# 5 Minutes with Boardwalk Empire's

## Wrenn Schmidt

Wrenn Schmidt plays Julia Sagorsky, the love interest of the disfigured World War I veteran (and assassin) Richard Harrow. Wrenn majored in History as well as Theater at SMU, equipping her with a unique appreciation for playing a character in 1920s-era Atlantic City.



Photo courtesy of HBO

### **You have done a lot of period plays. Is that what appeals to you about *Boardwalk Empire*?**

Most of those period plays were not written by contemporary playwrights. They were contemporary to their *time*—plays where the writing is so good that they're still being done now. That's the appeal, the writing, and it's the huge factor with *Boardwalk Empire*. It's the writing, hands-down. It's phenomenal.

### **Are the sets on the show as good as they look?**

For the most part, everything is so perfect, there's no lack of authenticity and everything kind of fits. You feel a little like you time travel when you go onto the set.

### **Viewers adore Jack Huston's character, Richard Harrow. What's it like to be the lady who stole his heart?**

It's really intense. Once it became clear to me that something was going to happen between Julia and Harrow, I was really, really nervous about how people were going to react. The audience is either going to love Julia because it seems like he might have an opportunity to have a family, or they're going to hate her because it's not going to be the kind of person that they imagined him to be with.

### **Was it fun when you realized where the relationship was headed last season?**

I have to say that I feel like I lucked out so much with this part. It's such a cool part. I loved working on the

scene we had together in the season finale—it's her first realization that she knows him, but there's a lot that she kind of needs to discover and figure out. That was definitely a huge surprise for Julia.

### **How important is chemistry with your screen partner to make scenes like that work?**

I feel like part of it is being open to whatever the other person brings to a scene. Jack is super generous, a very seasoned pro in a lot of ways, and he's totally a team player. That allows you to be more open and vulnerable, which is I think pretty much what all of our scenes require with each other. I feel safe working with him.

### **What are you doing when you're not doing scenes with Jack Huston?**

My most recent project is *The Master Builder* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music with John Turturro, and directed by Andre Belgrader, one of the great gems of the theater world. I feel like when you put that and *Boardwalk Empire* into an actor's realm of existence it's kind of like, should I pinch myself? Should I ask, *Is this really happening?*

**Editor's Note:** If Wrenn looks familiar, you may have seen her in *Our Idiot Brother* or *Client 9: The Rise and Fall of Eliot Spitzer*. **Tracey Smith** conducted this interview as part of her *Boardwalk Empire* project for this issue.