

# LEVEL UP

Danielle Campbell talks about her starring role as Little Red Riding Hood in *Tell Me A Story*, competing in the kitchen, and New Year's resolutions

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It's a cold day in October, the day before *Tell Me A Story's* premiere party. Danielle Campbell is already seated at a table in The Crosby Bar —inside New York City's Crosby Street Hotel— against a wall of floor-to-ceiling, warehouse-style windows that overlooks a private courtyard, when I walk in. The chic restaurant boasts robust splashes of color — in their mélange of pendant lighting, furniture, and wall art— and a cozy, inviting atmosphere.

Over the last ten years, the ambitious 23-year-old has graced the small screen on hit series including, *Prison Break*, *The Originals*, *Famous in Love*; amassed 3.1 million followers on Instagram; and been the envy of many for dating One Direction's Louis Tomlinson. With every role Danielle steps into, her star ascends to greater heights, alerting more and more of her natural talent and mesmerizing beauty.

Today, the diminutive actress is outfitted in all black—a turtleneck and jeans—aside from the slate-blue fedora atop her head and striped scarf looped around her neck. Danielle bears a striking resemblance to a young Angelina Jolie fused with Katie Holmes. Unquestionably gorgeous, her face straddles the line between innocent and sultry—with those steely green eyes and bee-stung pout—making her the perfect choice to play the fiery Kayla, aka Little Red Riding Hood, in *Tell Me A Story*.

Created by Kevin Williamson, best known for *Dawson's Creek*, *The Vampire Diaries*, and *Scream*, *Tell Me A Story* is a new CBS All Access original series based off the Mexican crime drama, *Érase una vez*. “Ours is a lot different from theirs though.” A psychological thriller with fairytale elements, also starring Kim Cattrall, James Wolk, and Dania Ramirez, the show is nothing like ABC’s *Once Upon A Time* as there are no supernatural aspects to it.

*Tell Me A Story* is based in modern-day New York City and follows the intertwined lives of the Three Little Pigs, a trio of pig-masked bank robbers; Hansel and Gretel, a figuratively lost brother and sister; and Little Red Riding Hood, who lives with her grandmother, portrayed by Kim Cattrall [“Which is amazing to be in New York City with her! It’s awesome. She’s been amazing to work with,” Danielle shares.]. However, in this tale, Red isn’t as innocent as you remember. “You see the red cape come out in different ways. She’s angry and she’s almost the wolf in some matters. New York is kind of a very dangerous place for all these characters, but it’s really interesting. I think that a lot of people are going to gravitate to it.” And don’t expect your typical ending. “Kevin does a great job at keeping you on the edge of your seat.” Fraught with drama, excitement, unexpected twists and turns, each episode has you wondering, what’s going to happen next?

Though Danielle never aspired to be an actress as a child, she immediately developed an affinity for show business. “I fell in love with the camera and being on set with people. We were shooting in a prison, which was the coolest thing to a 10-year-old. It was really amazing,” she recollects about her debut role on *Prison Break*. Growing up, Danielle’s family (her father is in real estate and her mother is in interior design) lived everywhere from Illinois (where she was born) to Singapore and Southeast Asia to New Jersey, then back to Chicago. While back in her home state, she was discovered by an agent while in a beauty salon with her mother. “I was obnoxiously talking to everyone in the salon and someone asked if I would take a meeting with their agency.” She credits her gregarious nature to her early exposure to different cultures and countries. “I think that forced my brother [Jay] and I

to kind of talk with people a lot and be used to new people and cultures.”

Navigating high school was something else though. Right before the start of her freshman year, Danielle flew to Los Angeles to film Disney’s TV movie, *StarStruck*. By the time she returned to Chicago, the school year was halfway through and everyone was already acquainted. “I was kinda known as the girl that weirdly was not there because I had been shooting, so I was very quiet in high school, much more so than I am now, mostly because I didn’t want the added attention that I already knew came with acting.” However, Danielle is grateful that her parents didn’t take her out of school. “I loved my friends that I grew up with and my teachers really, really helped. Honestly, I’m kinda surprised that it went as smoothly as it did, ‘cause it could’ve been a lot more difficult — I’ve heard stories.”

The summer before high school ended, Danielle jetted off to Atlanta to shoot the pilot for *The Originals*, a spin-off of *The Vampire Diaries*. “That was my college experience, so to speak,” she says with a laugh. Set in New Orleans, The CW series followed Klaus—the most powerful immortal, supernatural being in *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Originals* universe—and his family. “I played Davina, who was a witch in the French Quarter. I had some of the best memories shooting on that show. I did about three seasons fully and then went back for episodes through the fifth season. I’m still really close with all the cast, the creators. And Atlanta was a blast to shoot in.” *The Originals* went on for five seasons and aired its series finale this past April.

Danielle’s phone rings, putting our conversation on a brief hold. It’s Jay, Danielle’s younger brother, who just arrived in New York City from Los Angeles to accompany her to the premiere party. She gives him directions, then returns to our chat. Childhood anecdotes are injected throughout our conversation, illustrating the siblings’ close bond. With Christmas (Danielle’s favorite holiday) a few weeks away, I ask about her upcoming plans and traditions. “When I was really young, we used to go out to Utah and go snowboarding and spend it with my mom’s side. Over the last couple of years, we’ve either been in my parents’ house in Chicago or back in Utah. I love being in the mountains and I love the snow—those are some of the biggest traditions, just on that end. We always do a massive dinner for Christmas Eve and a massive dinner for Christmas.”

The Campbells love to cook, and playfully compete against one another in the kitchen. “I’m looking forward to making chocolate soufflé at home for Christmas—that’s one of our other traditions. Two years ago, my brother and I and my grandmother and my mom, we did

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“Fashion is about confidence, whatever you feel good in at the moment, and it’s allowed to change. People get really caught up in needing to say that they’re this type of person. Literally, they’ll say, ‘Oh, I don’t do that, I only wear vintage.’ I don’t want to pigeonhole myself.”

two different teams for making soufflés. My brother and I made the better one, for sure! Theirs deflated. It was a proud moment for us," she beams with a smile. So, what's the secret to soufflés? "I think it's not over whisking it, it makes it too dense and then it collapses, whereas you want it light and fluffy." I reference *Because I Said So's* memorable soufflé scene. "I love that movie. It's a sign that she wasn't with the right guy! I remember the first time my mom and I watched that in a hotel, I think we were in Los Angeles for pilot season. My mom would always come with me when I was really young to do auditions. We were in tears laughing —it was so funny."

Today, Danielle lives in Los Angeles —when she isn't on location shooting. In 2018, her acting career had her living in Boston, Los Angeles, Texas, and New York City for the last six months while filming *Tell Me A Story*. "It's been amazing being here in New York while it's starting to get cold. I love the cold. I love seasons, which you don't get in L.A. as much. It's nice 'cause in *Tell Me A Story*, it was really important to them to be shooting in New York. New York really feels like it's a character in the story because we're shooting all over. We're shooting in Brooklyn, we're shooting in lower Manhattan, we're shooting on the Upper East Side. You get to see the places that you would know New York for being."

New York has also served as the beautiful backdrop for Danielle's photography — a hobby she picked up, along with painting, a few years ago. The camera resting beside her Collins glass of club soda on our table often accompanies her when she's out and about as she enjoys photographing moving subjects and settings. "Being in New York, it's been a blast because people are moving constantly and there's so many different beautiful buildings and artwork all over the place. I went on one of the dinner boat cruises the other night, around the Statue of Liberty with some friends, the lighting was so beautiful that you didn't need to capture the sunset 'cause everything was a movement. It looked beautiful because of the glow that was everywhere." She adds that festivals and concerts, in particular, are ideal places to take photographs since people aren't standing around posing. "I like taking more of the candid-type pictures that are *truly* candid, instead of like, *OK, pose candid!* Y'know what I mean? *Ready? Laugh!* I'm really good at those by the way, which is not something I'm proud of," she says with a smile.

As for painting, Danielle is still figuring that medium out, experimenting with brush strokes and how different colors blend together. "I'm not at all a good painter. I just enjoy it and it relaxes me. Sometimes I'll just start painting and see what it turns into. You know when you look at a cloud and you're kinda watching it

and you think of what it looks like, and then it starts to change, and it looks like something else? That's kinda what happens sometimes when I'm painting. Most of the time it looks like something very abstract." Other times, she's happily surprised with how it turns out. Many of her paintings are just hanging out in her room, not quite finished yet. "I have a hard time finishing things sometimes," she confesses. "Sometimes, I get so excited about the next idea, and that's really been a thing for me to do with painting. It helps me finish something too and have something to show for it, which has been a lot of fun." Danielle hasn't really posted her art on social media, so these creative hobbies might surprise her 3.1-million followers —or so she thinks [the aforementioned hobbies were her answer to: What might fans be surprised to find out about you?].

Danielle's popular Instagram page features a collection of images — her travels, career highlights, events, tender moments with family and friends — that illuminate her free spirit and adventurous sense of style. Do you work with a stylist or is what's featured a combination of your stuff and theirs? "Combination of all, I think what stylists and fashion designers do —I think of fashion as art. I love fashion. Clothes are great; they're expressive," Danielle says passionately. She describes her style as ever-changing. Sometimes she feels like wearing sweatpants or jeans and a tee or a dress with cute heels —it really just depends on how she feels that day. "Fashion is about confidence, whatever you feel good in at the moment, and it's allowed to change. People get really caught up in needing to say that they're this type of person. Literally, they'll say, 'Oh, I don't do that, I only wear vintage.' I don't want to pigeonhole myself."

Danielle plays by her own rules, and this upcoming year, she wants to make sure she takes full advantage of all that comes her way. 2018 was a "really, really great year" for her, but she's looking forward to 2019. As for New Year's resolutions, she resolves to keep saying yes to things and to not overthink it. "It's really easy to say you're going to try and do that, but then the more that comes up, you're kind of just like, 'I'm tired, it'd be so much easier to do this tomorrow,' and that's normally me. But I think this year, I want to just say, 'yes,' and just try. I need to be picky 'cause I can't overdo it or I'll get sick. I'm going to push myself a bit more. I think that's what every year is for, to push yourself." **ML**

*Don't miss Tell Me A Story, currently streaming on CBS' premium streaming service, CBS All Access, and keep up with Danielle on Instagram: @TheDanielleCampbell and Twitter: @DanielleMcam*

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### Favorite movies

Danielle Campbell: "I love *Gladiator*, that's one of my favorites of all time. I just recently saw *A Star is Born*, I thought that was so well done."

### Favorite holiday movies

DC: "*Love Actually, The Holiday, The Family Stone*. I love *A Christmas Story*. There's certain movies that I feel I need to watch every single year, I don't know why, but I need to watch or I feel Christmas hasn't happened."

### Who are you listening to?

DC: "I've been listening to Amy Winehouse 'cause I just saw the documentary again. Her voice is unreal, I think she's got one of the most beautiful voices that I've ever heard. Growing up, my dad loves jazz...when I younger, she was how I started to appreciate it. Now I love jazz music, all of it. I love John Mayer. He's an easy one for me to say every time 'cause I love his music."

### Do you follow him on Instagram?

DC: "I *do* follow him on Instagram."

### He has some interesting/hilarious posts.

DC: "Some crazy stuff and none of it makes sense to me too, but it's fine. I don't mind 'cause it's John. It's like, *do your thing*. The last show that I went to of his was with my brother and my parents. My brother and I were going to see him in Los Angeles and my parents decided last-minute to come to L.A., so we were like, 'You guys have to come with us, 'cause we're not skipping the concert.' So the four of us went; it was actually a lot of fun. I'm listening to the Arctic Monkeys —saw them in concert when I was in Atlanta. I really like Halsey."

### You love to cook, what are you whipping up in the kitchen?

DC: "There's a Ginger Sesame Salmon I really love. I love spicy food. I make a Spicy Moroccan Chicken. I like to cook pretty healthy; I also love desserts too."