

'Vampire Academy' Film Takes Flight; Mark Waters Directing Daniel Waters' Script

By MIKE FLEMING JR. AND NANCY TARTAGLIONE | Friday February 1, 2013 @ 8:04pm EST

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EXCLUSIVE: Hoping to tap a new vein in the young adult vampire genre that made Twilight Saga such a global hit, Reliance Entertainment and IM Global are co-financing the first installment of a new film franchise based on the six-volume Richelle Mead young adult novel series that will come to the screen as Vampire Academy: Blood Sisters. Daniel Waters, who wrote the iconic Sundance black comedy Heathers, has written the script for the first movie. His brother, Mean Girls helmer Mark Waters, will direct the film. Casting is in full swing for a summer shoot.



An international search led the producers to Zoey Deutch (Beautiful Creatures) and Australian newcomer Lucy Fry. They will play lead characters Rose and Lissa alongside Russian star Danila Kozlovski (We Are From The Future,) who will play the role of Dimitri.

The film will be produced by Michael Preger and his Preger Entertainment banner, Angry Films' Don Murphy and Susan Montford, and Kintop



Pictures' Deepak Nayer. IM Global's Stuart Ford is executive producer.

All six books have been bestsellers on The New York Times young adult list since the series debuted in 2007. Two of the books have been turned into graphic novels. The books tell the tale of Rose Hathaway, a 17-year-old girl who has a mental and spiritual bond with her vampire best friend Lissa. The two girls attend a special school for Vampires who struggle to retain some humanity while other Vampires become more feral.

"Tonally this so different from all these movies that are so solemn and serious," IM Global's Ford said. "This is as much Mean Girls as The Hunger Games. "It is snappy, irreverent, sexy and just a lot of fun. And we got the right director for that kind of movie."



The Vampire Academy books were corralled as a film property by Miami-based Preger Entertainment. Preger is currently in development with a contemporized version of the sci-fi classic *The Day Of The Triffids*, with Sam Raimi and financier Good Universe. He brought the project to fellow Triffids producers Montford and Murphy and the trio partnered to bring the books to the screen.

“I was a fan of Richelle’s and have read all of her books,” Preger said. “She writes in way that is riveting no matter what your age. The key was to get people to read the books. Once they read one they want to read them all.” They turned to Daniel Waters, looking for a tone to which teenagers could relate. His script for *Heathers* hit that

mark so well that it’s often identified as the inspiration for anything teen that aspires to mix humor with angst and edge. Waters took on the project, and drafted his brother, who boarded the project as director.

“It was the best first draft I had ever read, and that includes other screenplays by my brother,” Mark Waters said. “This is a dream project for us, since we have wanted to work together for so long. Richelle’s mythology and the world she creates is so real and her voice so clear. These kids have real life, modern day problems. And they drink blood.” The popularity of the series was evident when they started a Facebook page for the film and got 238,000 signed up, a number much higher than a lot of films that have already been released.

At that point, Nayer, who previously produced *Bend It Like Beckham*, brought in Reliance and IM Global. “On a creative level we love the story and the creative team,” he said. “We also love the potential to do a series of six strong movies based on this beloved series of novels” he said. There could even be more as Mead has spun off characters from her Vampire Academy books into a second series, *Bloodlines*, two of which have already been released.

Reliance will finance the film and sister company IM Global’s Ford is handling foreign sales and will broker domestic.