

VIVIEN ENDICOTT DOUGLAS IS MARNIE MCBRIDE



According to everyone who worked on *Shoebox Zoo*, the young Canadian actress, Vivien Endicott-Douglas, is a star in the making.

Her co-star, the actor and director Peter Mullan, says she reminds him of 'a young Jodie Foster.' With a recommendation like that, it's obvious this 13-year-old from Toronto is going places.

As the pivotal figure in *Shoebox Zoo*, linking the real world with a magical one inhabited by wizards, illusionists and carved wooden animals who walk and talk, Vivien bears a big responsibility on her young shoulders.

Shoebox Zoo is Vivien's first job in television. Until now, her only professional acting jobs have been small parts in short films and some radio work in Canada. As Vivien explains, her love of acting goes back a long way.

"When I was little I always loved to watch *The Sound of Music*," she says. "I would always make my mum act everybody else while I was Maria and sing all the songs. All my dolls would be the kids and we would just play it over and over again."

When viewers first meet Marnie, it is the day of her 11th birthday, her mother has recently died and Marnie has yet to shed a tear. She has been uprooted from her home in Denver, Colorado, and finds it tough to settle into her new Scottish surroundings. A fish out of water, she has no idea what is in store for her until the animals come to life and join her on the quest for the Lost Book of Forbidden Knowledge, which will change her life forever.

"When I act the role of Marnie," smiles Vivien, "I just imagine these little creatures in front of me and it seems to work OK. The voices are great. They are a huge part of how I am able to imagine them being real living breathing creatures. They really help bring the characters to life."

Vivien says she has learned a lot from her fellow actors although she was a little nervous about the prospect: "At first I was a bit intimidated, but once I met them I realised how down-to-earth they are."

Both her younger siblings, she says, are enthralled by the story of *Shoebox Zoo*, although her little brother, Gareth, is 'terrified' of Professor Toledo.

"Whenever he sees Tony, who plays Toledo, he cowers behind me," she explains. "We have to explain to him that Tony isn't really like that but it gives you an idea of how good Tony is at his job of being a baddie!"

"I think kids will absolutely love *Shoebox Zoo* because it has magic and real life mixed in together. They will be able to identify with characters like Marnie and her friends because they're totally believable. The magical world is so enthralling, they won't want to leave it."

Although Vivien admits filming *Shoebox Zoo* has been hard work, she still can't believe she landed such a great part.

"When I first read it, a chill went through my body. The whole story sounded so exciting. Working on it has been like a dream. When I've been feeling tired out by all the long days on set, I tell myself this is a once-in-a-lifetime thing. I can't believe how lucky I am to be involved in it."