

Winter Wonderland

By: Noelle Hancock

The mercury hit 85 degrees on May 24, but at the American Museum of Natural History, where 20th Century Fox held the premiere for its summer blockbuster *The Day After Tomorrow*, everything was done to make an instant climatological shift covering New York City in ice seem plausible.

Real snowdrifts had been created by ice machines and dumped so that they flanked the white carpet -- but reality trumped Hollywood when the incongruous mounds began to melt.

Making the best of it was the movie's star, Jake Gyllenhaal; the indie *Boy Wonder* did his best imitation of a Hollywood bad boy when he told reporters, "I like screwing around!" Co-star Austin Nichols turned to *The Transom* and began to offer his assessment of Mr. Gyllenhaal:

"I can't say enough good things about Jake -- "

POW! A snowball hit him in the face. A few yards away, Mr. Gyllenhaal cackled impenitently.

"So, I take that back," Mr. Nichols said.

"I meant to hit Teddy Roosevelt," the film's star protested by way of an excuse, gesturing to the statue in front of the museum. "I almost managed to hit his ass, but I don't think I got it."

Meanwhile, more faux snow blasted the crowd from above, but before long it was clear the stuff was actually made from soap bubbles. Paparazzi yowled that their lenses were going to be ruined; reporters donned sunglasses during interviews to keep the suds from burning their eyes as several of the movie's stars walked the white carpet under umbrellas held by attendants.

"We all look like we have dandruff!" Mr. Gyllenhaal cracked.

A reporter asked actress Sela Ward the disaster-themed question of whether she had any regrets in her life.

"Only standing in this!" she said of the ice water and soap that blanketed the floor -- a Mini-Me version of the mass of dirty water that sweeps Manhattan in the movie.

When it began to rain on the premiere, the cast recalled the three months they spent shooting in a giant water tank.

"Wet and cold!" said Emmy Rossum of her time spent in the tank. She plays Mr. Gyllenhaal's love interest. "We were shivering a lot of the time -- lots of toweling off -- but I can't tell you how fun it was!"

"I think I may have been guilty of urinating in the tank," Mr. Nichols confided.

"I think there's something cathartic about disaster films," said Mr. Gyllenhaal. "You walk out of the theater and say, 'Oh, thank God -- it's still here!'"

In the movie, Mr. Gyllenhaal manages to save his love interest from impending doom (oh, as if you didn't know!), but how about in real life? What if he could only save one thing? "A cucumber," the former Columbia student deadpanned. "It's an important vegetable, fruit!"

Suddenly he bent down and scooped up some snow. "Want me to throw another one?" he asked. And with that, he formed a tight little ball, cocked his arm back and shouted, "Incoming!"

Eager Girls

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"We were on our way over here and the radio was up and it said, 'Radio City, pretty busy because of Harry Potter,'" chirped James Phelps, the tall redhead Briton who plays Fred Weasley in the Harry Potter franchise. "And I was like, 'O.K., pretty busy,' and then we turned the corner and it was like, 'Oh, my!'"

The sight of 500 screaming Potterheads outside Radio City Music Hall waiting to get a look at their Hogwarts idols on the way into the premiere of Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban must have been something for the young thespian to behold. There was chanting (Har-RY Pot-TER! Har-RY Pot-TER!); two kids held up an impressive homemade Dementor (the soul-sucking demons that play a large role in the film); a young girl held a poster that read "Marry me, Dan!" with a heart encircling the face of Daniel (Harry Potter) Radcliffe. And, rather more obscurely, there was the sign that read: " Harry Potter is Jewish! Take pride in Israel -- Harry does!"

Witches, ghosts and wizards sent by central casting to roam the red carpet mingled improbably with ER's Anthony Edwards, actresses Natalie Portman, Gina Gershon and Cynthia Nixon, who was back to her natural blond hair and being led down the red carpet by her daughter.

Toothy model Christie Brinkley posed with her family; Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins rushed past with theirs. Matchbox Twenty's Rob Thomas brought his model wife, Marisol Maldonado, a dead-ringer for actress Claire Forlani.

"I'm 10 right now!" she said, looking around.

Nearby, Emma Watson, better known as Azkaban's witchy know-it-all Hermione Granger, was correcting a reporter who'd gotten her age wrong. "Fourteen, actually," she said, sounding not unlike her smartypants character.

"I've spent two years denying that I'm anything like her!" she laughed when confronted with the comparison. "But now I think I might be as bossy as her!"

She was, however, looking decidedly un-Hermione -- wrapped in a glamorous strapless Lanvin gown the color of chocolate milk, paired with Marc by Marc Jacobs bejeweled pointy white flats.

Also looking quite dapper was 14-year-old Daniel Radcliffe, who's been playing the title character for three years. In a spiffing pinstriped suit and pocket square (and wearing makeup!), he reminded us that Harry isn't the only one growing up. "I've been short for so long and now I'm growing, which is great! I'm still really short for my year. I don't care, I'm growing, dammit!" he cursed.

Ten points from Gryffindor!

The Harry Potter dynasty has made Mr. Radcliffe the second-richest teenager in the U.K. (another Harry, the Prince, is the titleholder). Nevertheless, he was just as awestruck by the fans.

"Insane, totally insane, but brilliant!" he stammered, looking out at the crowd.

Tom Felton (a.k.a. Draco Malfoy) showed up -- all 6-foot-1 of him -- his signature platinum locks cut close and reduced to a muted ashy hue. We asked the 16-year-old how he handles the bleach.

"I don't! Ugh! Can't handle that. I've cut it off now, obviously. I can handle it when I'm filming, that's it though."

So is his personality anything like the bad-boy wizard he plays onscreen?

"It's the complete opposite, really," he said. "I'm not half as immature or half as slimy as Draco, except maybe with my older brothers."

He has three.

"I do try, though!"

His charmingly spotted face was intent as he glanced around excitedly.

"I've never been to a New York premiere," he said. "This is my first. The ladies are more eager!"