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Annie toy story

Rob Latour/Rex/Shutterstock Annie Potts has been voicing Bo Peep in the Toy Story franchise since its first incarnation in 1995. Back then, Potts’ character was far from front and center though, as she mostly aided the exploits of Tom Hanks’ Woody from the background. But in this year’s Toy Story 4, Potts enjoys a much-deserved major role. This time, Bo Peep is a leading action hero, rescuing Woody and generally ruling the toy box. Here, Potts discusses how she almost didn’t take the original role at all, the evolution of her character, and what we can expect from her imminent revisit to another old favorite: Ghostbusters. DEADLINE: Going back to the first Toy Story, did you feel that this role was for you right from the get-go? ANNIE POTTS: I love to tell the story how my agent had called and said, “They’re interested in you for this project, and it’s the first fully computer-animated feature film.” I was like, “I don’t even know what you just said. What would that be?” Anyway, he said, “Well, they sent along some of their shorts so you can look at the work and understand it.” I was like, “Okay, great.” But I was busy and had a lot of children and was working and I forgot to look. They sent me three boxes trying to remind me to look at it. Finally, my agent said, “Please look at it.” I said, “I’m going to.” I didn’t. One afternoon, not too much later after that, I came home and my three-year-old took my hand and said, “Mommy, mommy, come watch.” He’d gotten in the boxes because he loves to open any kind of box, thinking it’s a present for him. He had been watching them all day, I watched the first three little shorts. I was so blown away, I called my agent immediately and said, “Yes, yes. Please, I want to be a part of this.” I didn’t care what it was. I didn’t even know what the role was. DEADLINE: They obviously really wanted you for it. POTTS: They really had firm ideas of the voices that they wanted to hear. I have a funny voice. Usually, I can get by unrecognized unless I open my mouth. Then there it is. DEADLINE: How did you approach the role? How did you get into the part? POTTS: We never saw a script for any of them. You just go in and they give you the lines of the day and go through them one-by-one and tell you a little bit. In the beginning, they’re just pencil drawings. Then, as it goes along, they’re able to show you more increasingly defined pictograms, and then they start to animate. It’s sort of like archaeology. You just dig, dig, dig until you uncover the temple. It’s like, “Oh, wow. Look at that.” It’s such granular work in the beginning. They always had the most wonderful people directing and involved. There’s always a room full of people there telling you how your hair and your hand is going to move in this scene. They’re very granularly interested. It takes hundreds of human hours to make a frame of those films. I worked on Toy Story 4 for 4.5 years. The Pixar folks have been on it way longer than that. But you’re always in the best hands, and the proof is in that pudding. DEADLINE: This was your first time working with Josh Cooley as director. POTTS: He’s such a lovely person and so deeply invested. He’s a very smart and kind person, which is good because you’ll say a single line 50-75 times. It’s not like when you’re in the theater. You memorize the whole scene, show up, and let it evolve as you act it out. Most of the time, of course, you’re not acting with the other actors. Although, Tom and I did get to work together quite a bit on this last one, but that’s not usual. You’re in a vacuum there with your director. He’s a very nice person to be in a vacuum with. I trusted him implicitly. DEADLINE: What was that experience of working with Tom together after all this time finally? POTTS: Of course, any time spent with Tom Hanks is a wonderful thing. He is such a lovely person. Everybody’s game is the best when you’re around the best. DEADLINE: This installment of the franchise is especially great for you. Bo Peep is empowered and saves the day. Was it really gratifying to have that storyline for her this time around? POTTS: It was. Before, she was just an ancillary character. Apparently, they always had this in mind for it to evolve in this way, but none of us actors certainly knew that. Of course, I was thrilled to hear that I get to be the female heroine in this and then it’s kind of her deal. DEADLINE: She’s a great role model for all those young girls watching. POTTS: Right. Yes, for me too. Like, pick yourself up and go on no matter what it is. They’re wonderful, inspiring tales of integrity and bravery and all the good stuff, which is in short supply in our country right now. It’s nice that at least we get these role models in the movies. DEADLINE: We also have the new Ghostbusters to look forward to. Any hints about that? How do you feel about your role in it? POTTS: I think what I can say is I think that it will be beloved. I think people are just going to go crazy for it because Jason Reitman found a wonderful approach for it. Just wonderful. I can’t wait. We’ve just finished it, so I haven’t seen anything yet, but I can’t wait. Subscribe to Deadline Breaking News Alerts and keep your inbox happy. Disney Pixar’s Toy Story 4 marks the return of Annie Potts to the series as the voice of fan-favorite character Bo Peep. She was absent from Toy Story 3, which is explained in this fresh installment in theaters Friday. However, the Bo Peep we will see onscreen is not the one we remember. I got a chance to sit down with Potts to discuss Bo’s return and so much more.Annie Potts with Wallace Shawn at the ‘Toy Story 4’ Hollywood premiere. Shawn voices Rex the plastic dinosaur. Photo courtesy Disney Pixar Studios.I must admit that I did fangirl a little. After all, this is ANNIE POTTS! She has appeared on the tv and film screens, often debuting on both screens at the same time. She has been so many beloved characters over her prolific 42-year career. And, she is still going. I started watching Potts when I was a young girl. Then, I would catch episodes of Designing Women (1986-1993) when my mom wasn’t around.Around that time, I also caught Potts in a classic role as the bold, gum-smacking secretary Janine in the Ghostbusters films, beginning in 1984. She has appeared in all the films that became iconic for pop culture nerds like me. Pretty in Pink, Jumpin Jack Flash, and so many more. Potts is still working tv and film, as the feisty, imaginative grandma in Young Sheldon, reprising her role as Janine in an upcoming Ghostbusters reprisal, and in the return of Bo Peep for Toy Story 4.I have to tell you. I’ve been fangirling ever since they told me that I’d be talking with you. I used to watch Designing Women. I wasn’t supposed to, because you know, it was too mature for me. But I loved Mary Jo, because she has part of my name in her name, and she’s so fiery. I mean, you’ve just always been a badass. And now with Bo, [Pixar animators] said they patterned her after Uma Thurman in Kill Bill...I hadn’t heard that...Pixar animators explained the “New Bo Peep” in a ‘Toy Story 4’ Press Day demonstration. Courtesy Disney Pixar Studios.What do you think of that?Well, I’m thinking, they took a lot from action heroines. It’s very good for all the little girls and boys to see these kick-ass mamas, I guess.And it seems to it to me — I don’t know if it’s just because I was watching for it — but with Bo back, it seemed like the women had a stronger presence this time around [in Toy Story 4]. They were not just comforting everybody. They were doing the thing! [There were] the Barbies in the beginning, and Jesse when Buzz had left her to do his thing. So, do you think it was a conscious thing to have the women kind of coming up front?Well, I hope it was conscious, I don’t think it was an accident.[Laughing]Long ago, when my oldest son was little, I was cooking dinner and reading a script at the same time, because that’s my life. And you know, he’s always vying for attention from my work and my duties.‘What are you reading mommy?’ I said I don’t know. I’m just getting into it.He said, ‘because, you know, there’s only three roles in any movie.’And I said, ‘Yeah, what is that?’And he said, ‘the good guy, the bad guy, and the woman who waits.’I was like, ‘say that again.’And he repeated it. And I thought, Oh, my God, he’s right. It’s the guys who were always doing the action. And the woman who’s waiting. Either waiting on his table or waiting for him to make a choice, so that she can be more supportive.No more! Women, we’re the ones. We’re not waiting anymore. And we’re not waiting to say, ‘Hey, listen are you pussies going to come with us?’ Because we’re doing it! We are. Yeah. And I think, there’s all sorts of political ramifications of that now, but hey, we’re not waiting anymore.Here’s a clip of this part of the interview. You have to hear it to get the energy of her message.Bo Peep, Woody, Buzz take new characters Ducky (Keegan Michael Key) and Bunny (Jordan Peel) on their latest adventure in ‘Toy Story 4’. Photo Courtesy Disney Pixar Studios. [Abridged here to remove spoilers about the ending]...There’s more than one theme, more than one message [in Toy Story 4] — even in Bo’s story. What would you say is the maybe the biggest message that Bo has for, or that she presents to, kids?I think that the message is, or the ideas are there, that she hasn’t had a single owner to love her. But, she’s found plenty of kids in need. There’s a million and they love to pick us up, [and play with]us in the sand. Her arm’s just fallen off. She’s ripped. Her skirt’s torn. She took it off. She made a cape. She’s continued to reinvent herself and be with humor and grace and gumption.Concept art for Bo Peep in ‘Toy Story 4’. Courtesy Disney Pixar Studios.And she’s kind of unbreakable. Hurt, like, you can hurt me, but you cannot break me. Would I call her a survivor? Um, yeah, I will call her survivor. Like I said to the women in the last group — I’m not sure if you were in there or not — but if she had superpowers, [they] would be heart and courage. And that is a real thing. She is the real thing.She IS the real deal. Today is National best friends. They know. So, I was thinking about Bo, you know, she’s got the sheep. There’s Woody, and then she’s Giggles McDimples. 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If Bonnie needs a sheriff, she pins Woody’s badge on Jessie (Joan Cusack).Nothing if not doggedly loyal, Woody, who realizes Bonnie is anxious about her first day of kindergarten, tags along, and surreptitiously helps her build a toy, a decorated spork she names Forky (Tony Hale). Forky considers himself trash, since that’s where some of his parts came from. So Woody conducts what amounts to a suicide watch to keep Forky from constantly diving into the nearest garbage can.A road trip goes awry when Forky makes a break for it and winds up in a creepy antiques store; of course Woody goes after him. Up to this point, the film has been pretty funny, if a little predictable. But now who’s waiting. Either waiting on his table or waiting for him to make a choice, so that she can be more supportive.No more! Women, we’re the ones. We’re not waiting anymore. And we’re not waiting to say, ‘Hey, listen are you pussies going to come with us?’ Because we’re doing it! We are. Yeah. 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