

People

The O.C.'s Autumn Reeser

Harbor High's newest villain shares a few of her own high-school secrets

By Jessica Herndon

Originally posted Thursday November 03, 2005 06:00 AM EST

Photo by: Michael Tran / FilmMagic



Autumn Reeser swears that in high school she wasn't anything like her O.C. character, Taylor Townsend – the preppy, double-crossing nemesis of Summer Roberts (Rachel Bilson). "I liked being a player in high school," says the former head cheerleader and homecoming-court royal. "(But) I definitely was not a bitch." Still, Reeser, 25, who grew up in Carlsbad, Calif., admits she once toilet-papered a rival's house – and got called to the principal's office for it. PEOPLE recently caught up with the actress (*The Girl Next Door*) and got the scoop on her own high-school traumas, working with the O.C. cast and her real-life grown-up romance.

Your name is Autumn and you play Summer's enemy. What's up with that casting?

(Laughs) It's just, I don't know, meant to be or something. It is the funniest thing. And I know there's not that many girls named Autumn.

Since you've been on the show, have you been recognized more?

You know what was funny? I went into a call-back yesterday and I was talking with the assistant there and he's looking at my résumé and he goes, "You're Taylor?" Apparently

he's totally obsessed with the show and I was right there and he didn't recognize me. I think it's because I'm not like Taylor in person. I don't dress like Taylor.

What kind of role do you prefer: the sweetheart or the bitch?

The bitch. Oh, totally. Honestly, I went to school with a lot of girls like (Taylor) and I feel like it's a little skewer. It's just fun. You do things that you wouldn't necessarily do in real life, hopefully.

Did you have any Taylor-style drama in high school?

The only time I ever had any serious rivalry with anybody, there was one girl – she was a cheerleader, too – and I started dating (her ex-boyfriend). I just remember one time, she walks by in the hallway and she's like, "Bitch." I don't think I'd ever been called that by anybody, to my face at least, so I was like, "Oh my God!" I was traumatized at the time. Now I think it's funny.

How are you fitting in with the O.C. cast? Are you guys getting along?

Rachel's really been particularly sweet to me. I work with her the most, so she's just been a doll. She's a really sweet person and, yeah, I like everybody.

Anyone special in your life?

I'm with my boyfriend (actor Jesse Warren). We've been together for almost four years and we live together. We have a dog named Gatsby, like *The Great Gatsby*.

Where'd you guys meet?

We met at UCLA theater school, but we didn't date until we were both out of college. He's a great guy.

What makes the relationship work?

There's no subject that's taboo. We talk about everything. He's a great listener and he's really willing to share. And he's an actor, too. I have a lot of girlfriends who are like, "I'm never gonna date an actor. They're too self-absorbed or whatever," but I can't imagine not being with him. The support is extraordinary. So yeah, I love him.