

'The 100' star Chelsey Reist talks Becoming Series Regular, MARPER and Season 4 Twist!

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It's hard to wrap my head around the fact that Chelsey Reist hasn't always been a series regular on The CW's hit series *The 100*. It feels like her character has been an intricate piece of the puzzle for quite some time, but it's nice to finally see the talented actress get some long overdue recognition. I mean, how could you forget Harper, the delinquent who had her bone marrow harvested back during the Mount Weather days? She's resilient AF and has remained at the forefront of our minds— even before her and Monty were #RelationshipGoals. And to think, she was meant to be Jasper's love interest ::chokes to death from disgust:: We'll have none of that here. MARPER for life!

Not only does she have an adorable new beau by her side heading into the apocalypse, but she's also holding her own in the guard... which, is no small feat. Reist spoke with excessive pride when it came to being the last lady standing, and when it comes to protecting the camp, and her own as doomsday creeps upon us, this badass is ready for a fight.

From transition of power and Clarke's deadly decisions, to bracing for the end, Reist chatted with me about all things Harper and Season 4— and as an added bonus, I might have also snuck in some questions about pizza — all in all, it felt much like catching up with an old friend, and I can't wait to see what new challenges are in store for Harper and the rest of the gang...

MCKENZIE MORRELL: It's been nearly a year since we did our last interview and congratulations are in order. You're a series regular now. What was your reaction to finding out that news?

CHELSEY REIST: I had been having this interesting year where nothing was really moving for me in my career and I love *The 100* so much and of course who doesn't want to be a series regular, so I wanted that and wanted so many things for my life and nothing was really moving. Here's a little backstory. I ran into a psychic in LA a couple years ago and she was like "you're in a relationship that's preventing you from moving forward in your career. You're blocking energy and you need to let go." And so I had tried everything to forward my career and nothing was moving and finally the last thing I could think of in the back of my mind was this comment from this psychic and the person I was with, we decided to end it — not because of that — and the second I did I got these calls from my agent like "hey do you want to guest star on this NBC pilot?" I got flown down to LA for some night time talk shows and *The 100* called and they wanted me back as a series regular. My reaction was "oh my god, what the heck!?" It all kind of came flowing at once and I am so grateful. I just catch myself these days, even though we're done filming, I get to re-experience it when it starts airing and I'm walking around heart so full of gratitude. I am so so happy.

MM: I know you were having a little viewing party the other day with Aaron Ginsburg and I saw you guys were making pizza. To stem off of that, if you had to pick a type of pizza based on Harper's personality, what would it be and what kind of toppings would be on it?

CR: Aaron is amazing. I said "Aaron you have to bring me in when you pizza prep and we have to make a Harper pizza." I'll have to start thinking of actual toppings but the first thing that came to my mind was pineapple. I don't know why. She's a little sour. She's a little sweet. So probably something with Pineapple.

MM: Were you able to have his Clarke pizza? I've been wanting to try it and it's been on my list forever.

CR: I did. It was delicious. Those pizzas were some of the best I've ever had. I'm in LA right now for a couple months and I feel bad because I'm going to be living out of his house now.



Credit: The CW

MM: Hey, that isn't a bad place to be! Now, your character has seen her ups and downs throughout the series and now the group faces this impossible task. How do you think Harper is going to react to this impending apocalypse? Is she going to feel like giving up like the City of Light situation?

CR: It's interesting. If you stop to think "how would we feel if someone told you in two months the world was ending." We're going to see people react differently than we expect. I'll say this, Harper reacts differently than I would have expected. At first, when the writers presented me with something I thought "oh!" That kind of surprised me and it took me a minute and it took me a minute to think about how it came to be but the more I sat with it and we filmed it, it's something that I came to find feels natural for Harper and comes from a natural place for me. We're going to find out fairly soon her reaction to the end of the world and it's a surprising one. For me it was.

MM: Do you feel a sense of responsibility being the only female soldier left in the group?

CR: I feel a sense of pride, that's for sure. Everyone I talk to, I'm like "I am the only female guard!" It's really exciting. Yeah, I absolutely feel a sense of responsibility. I've worked really hard personally, as Chelsey, to become extremely fit in my own life. I want to represent Harper as the strongest she can be. I think it's interesting to represent that dichotomy in a women of strength and humility. Harper is strong. I've worked to get my own body strong. But also we'll see moments of empathy. I think it's important to represent a woman in Harper. We are so multi faceted. And also to represent a kick butt guard.

MM: The roles have really been reversed since we first started the show. The adults were the ones making the decisions as extinction was looming and now the kids are pretty much in charge. What is that like for you as an actor to see that shift in power in the presence on screen?

CR: That's an interesting question. I've always felt like Clarke has been in charge. I know we've had Chancellors, the people making the decisions, but it feels like a natural transition for me. It doesn't feel like much is new. I feel like we've always watched any decision made by the Chancellor's through Clarke's point of view so now to see these decisions go through her feels normal. It's exciting. It's an exciting time. It's interesting to watch her mirror what we saw before when the adults were in charge. Let's say, when Jaha was ruling, we see that now in Clarke. She's taking over and trying to get the Ark fixed so we can hide away from the radiation. But now we found out about Luna and the night blood and I'm wondering if that's like a reverse Mount Weather situation. We might see her start to emulate President Wallace.

MM: That's the thing, even three seasons later, Harper's Mount Weather trauma is still brought up on the show. You've mentioned that that night blood is kind of what we need to survive. Do you think Clarke would ever be in the position of rounding up all the night bloods they can find and store up for the apocalypse or is she still on the track of trying to find a better way?

CR: The question on this show is always a debate of the needs of the many vs. the needs of the few. This is clearly one of those situations again. I'd say stay tuned.

MM: Fair enough, now we recently saw Clarke make a list of one hundred people to save when the end comes. If you were in her shoes, which top ten people do you think are necessary for everyone to survive and would any grounders be on it?

CR: Oh wow. The top ten, my brain just goes to our usual gang. Harper's watched them take control and save people and she's alive for a reason. Monty is on there for sure. I'm not sure about grounders. Harper's been so hurt by so many people other than her clan. I think now she's got this hardened sense. She's a defender of her own now. She's a guard. She's the only female guard. We know the world is ending and people get possessive at that time, you want to save your own. So no. I wish I could say she'd want to save everyone but I have a feeling she might just want to be close to those that she loves.

MM: I can see where that would come into play. Obviously Monty and Harper are finally going steady [laughs]. Will we see her help Monty deal with his grief not only from losing his mom again last season but everything that is going on with Jasper that has yet to unfold?

CR: It's been an interesting turn because when Harper was trapped in Mount Weather and they stole her bone marrow, Monty was there in the cages with her and he really supported her. We have those scenes of him feeding her tea. He really helped guide her through, which lead to their relationship. Now Harper is in a place of strength and we're now seeing these crazy depths of emotion from Monty. In 402, when he killed the Ice Nation guy, that scene with Monty broke my heart. Monty was in this place of "do I kill him, what do I do?" And Harper steps up and holds his hand to say "it's okay if you need to do this." She's supporting him in even the darker steps he has to make. I think we're definitely going to see more of their relationship. Being a series regular is fantastic because it's allowing more screen time for that relationship to breathe. Chris and I are thrilled about it. I couldn't be happier to have an on screen partner like Chris. I'm excited to see how it unfolds.



Credit: The CW

MM: We are too. Any rough patches for the new couple other than Raven constantly barging in after they've had a steamy moment?

CR: Fricken Raven. Yeah, we're going to see everyone's relationships tested. It's now the end of the world. Before it was kind of our clan against the other clans but when you're facing imminent death, it would be natural to have moments of self preservation. So maybe some characters start questioning how to survive alone as opposed to in a group or a clan or a partnership. Things will be tested for sure.

MM: I want to see Harper interact with some new characters this season. Can you tease anything in relation to that, maybe Murphy or Emori or OCTavia, anybody?

CR: I was really excited in 402 because she got to go to the Ice Nation when they went to steal the Hydro Generator from Farm Station. When I read in the script that they were hopping out on a snow bed up to Ice Nation I thought that was pretty cool. In terms of who she interacts with, we get to see — I might have to get back to you on this one because I have an answer but I feel like it's a massive spoiler. We get to see Harper interact with the usual characters in brand new ways, to much greater depths.

MM: Which new character are you most excited about? We have the introduction of Gaia and Ilian.

CR: Every addition blows me away. Everyone feels like a natural addition to the show. It's as if they've been there all along, which we need to believe, right? I think Tati [Gabrielle] who plays Gaia, she's so bubbly in real life and so cool. I only met her a few times and she was really funky and a phenomenal addition to the show. And what an amazing twist. And Chai [Hansen], who plays Ilian is a fantastic addition as well. We hang out in Vancouver and had a beautiful behind the scenes day at the Vancouver Aquarium with Justine [Juel Gillmer] who is one of our writers and Katie who played Monroe. We hung out a lot in real life and he's this sweet, gentle soul. So it's interesting to see him play this tech hunting angry guy on *The 100*. Those two are my favorite additions so far.

MM: RIP Monroe.

CR: I know. Always.

MM: How has your approach as an actor changed since season one?

CR: It's always different. In season one I would have one word or one line and it's often the dialogue that's mandatory and needs to get across like "they're coming!" It's pretty straight forward. It's imperative to get these lines across immediately and with the weight that they need. But now that there's more screen time for Harper there's really a chance to breathe with the work and be more natural with it and really sit in it. I have some lovely scenes with Chris this year and they're some of my favorite I've ever filmed on *The 100*. Having more screen time allows me to work with these relationships deeper. My process has changed now that I know all these characters better. Obviously from season one to now you really get to know how a character will react. I know, when I read a certain line, how Monty would react without even having to read the next line. You really are able to be natural about it in a way and embody the character as if it truly were you.

MM: It's so strange to watch the show now. I rewatched it from the beginning before the season came back and it's a completely different show. Not in a bad way but it's evolved so much.

CR: I agree. I rewatched it too and I watch it every week. I'm actually a fan of the show. It feels a little *Black Mirror* to me in a way that they have every episode different but every

season for us is different. Just watching the last episode I was blown away. I can't believe the changes in Bellamy. He's so grown up now and so different. It's fun to see the writers give leeway to the characters to change so much.

MM: That's the thing about the characters is there's so much about them. In the beginning, I really hated Murphy and now I really love Murphy. I think that they really grow and they're learning. They're growing up. They're teenagers and it takes time for them to grow into who they are. It's great that they're not black and white and we don't love or hate them the entire time.

CR: Sometimes we hate to love them and sometimes we love to hate them.



Credit: The CW

MM: Obviously! Now, you guys get to do a bunch of conventions. You recently attended Unity Days in Canada. How was it meeting the fans?

CR: It's just the most amazing experience. My mother asked me after we did the first few conventions in Paris, "what's it like?" And I would have thought, because Paris is such a huge convention and there are so many beautiful dedicated fans and there's tons of them and they're screaming and excited and following you and there are tears. I'd think that would be overwhelming but it feels so natural to me. It feels like the most wonderful place where I can accept their energy and they can accept mine. To be able to have the chance to interact with fans who — the show has changed their life. It's moving to see. I love it. I had so many one on one conversations with fans at Unity Days about their own struggles with whatever and the fans who have had issues and how Harper has inspired them that's forever moving. As an actor, to play a character that moves people to better their lives or feel more confident, it's priceless. And it's so fun. It's so fun to hang out with everyone from the show.

We genuinely are friends and they crack me up. I'm just laughing the whole time. My cheeks hurt by the end of it. Especially when Sachin's around. It's non stop. I can't keep makeup on because I'm crying from laughing.

MM: That's so amazing to hear. For the last three years I have been pulling for *The 100* to attend New York Comic Con. It has not happened. We definitely need some sort of United States, East Coast based gathering. Would you be on board for something like that?

CR: Absolutely! I want to go to New York so badly.

MM: Let's do it. I know you guys have filming conflicts because October is around the time you guys are shooting and stuff but I think that you need to be there. Everybody would love to see you there.

CR: We'll have to sign a petition and send it to them. Is it extremely vain for me to sign my own petition to send me to New York?

MM: No. You need to come and have donuts and cookie dough and all the good things.

CR: Let's work on that for real.

MM: Deal! To conclude, why is this season different from the rest? Why should people tune in?

CR: Every season has kind of been clans against clans. People fighting for their space, fighting for their territory, fighting to survive. This season is an entirely new twist where it's the clans versus the world which is ending. Every relationship, whether good or bad is changing. Everything is altered because the world is ending. Alliances will be questioned. Alliances you never expected may be formed. It's an entirely new formula and the clock is ticking. We have two months until it's all over. I would watch for that, just to see the total overhaul of dynamic and the complete change with the ticking clock.

MM: Well, count me in- you know I'm excited.

CR: And for Harper.

MM: And for Harper!

'The 100' airs Wednesday nights at 9/8c on The CW.
