

Hallowed Be Her Name: Sara Thompson talks Josephine Lightbourne, the mesmerizing villain from Season 6 of 'The 100'

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Villains rarely last long on *The 100*, let alone steal the show! Sara Thompson broke the baddie mold with her portrayal of Josephine Lightbourne: the ruthless, fascinating, and completely insane character, who took the fandom by storm this past season. Thompson's

character not only hijacked Clarke Griffin's body, but infiltrated our leading ladies mind-space in the name of self-preservation. She painted us a unique picture of a seemingly normal girl-turned-God, and boy was it polarizing. It's one of those things in life you never knew you wanted, but needed nonetheless.

Here's the kicker though, the role of Josephine, an immortalized sociopath, was not only played by Thompson, but several other actors over the course of the season, including our leading lady Eliza Taylor. The never-ending body swap was due to dear old Josie being resurrected many (many, many, many) times thanks to tech in the form of a minddrive and misinformed hosts (aka sacrifices) that made this self-proclaimed God essentially live forever. Because why not. That seems totally unselfish.

Thompson, a magnetizing performer both on-screen and off, managed to intrigue the audience and although we endlessly begged for our beloved Clarke to regain control of her body, mind, and soul, we couldn't help but feel devastated when Josephine's brain dissipated back into the virtual prison of the minddrive in order to get our hero back once and for all. But have we seen the last of Josephine Lightbourne? Can we expect to see her in the final season of *The 100*? We freakin' hope so!

Thompson was kind enough to chat with Fan Fest News about Season 6 of The CW's hit series *The 100*, the challenges faced playing such a deranged brainiac, and discussed the upcoming release of a project with *The 100* co-star Richard Harmon.

Let's get crazy...

MCKENZIE MORRELL: You made quite a splash this season on *The 100*. Josephine Lightbourne, your character, made such a big impact in such a short time. Can you kinda tell the readers about her and why you think so many of *The 100* fans were drawn to your character this season?

SARA THOMPSON: Josephine moved to Sanctum with her family and she is quite a smart cookie. She is somewhat ruthless, she is very determined to do what's best for her family, what's best for her people, what's best for them no matter what the cost is. She's a little bit sassy and she's fun and she's flirty and she's pretty cool. I think the fans are very into her because you know, dare I say, she's very similar to Clarke in the sense that she's willing to do whatever it takes and she does it with a certain slyness. I think she finds humor in really ridiculous things and I think she's really fun to hate. She's that character.

MM: She is that character, for sure. Since there's so many similarities between Josephine and Clarke, if things were different and she didn't hijack Clarke's mind and body, do you think that they would have been friends in another life?

ST: Well you know, I do believe that is a line that I say. I say 'If things were different we could have been friends, but I'm bored now' and then she tries to kill herself. So yeah, of course

they'd be friends. I think they'd be great friends. I think they *were* great friends. They had a moment where they had to work together despite literally trying to kill each other but they had no choice but to work together to stay alive. And their brains were kind of warped a similar way and – of course they'd be friends, yeah.

MM: And obviously the fans sent in some questions for you and the majority said that you were their favorite villain on the show thus far. Have you been feeling that kind of love on social media? How do you deal with the feedback from the masses, good or bad?

ST: Oh yeah, I've been feeling that love *heavily*, since the very beginning they thought 'I don't know who this is or what her story is but I'm down with it.' That was really cool, it kind of happened overnight and I'm thinking 'Oh gosh, ok, so they don't really know what I'm about to do.' When you first see her, you think 'oh, she's cute, she's fun, she's flirty, let's go, let's see what she's up to.' Then, in my own head, I'm saying 'You guys are gonna hate me soon.' But they didn't! They loved me, they loved her, they loved all of it which was so cool. I loved playing a villain and I loved the way that she portrayed the villain within. I've been getting such amazing feedback. There was a quick moment in there where people said 'Ok, we like you but give her her body back' you know, but then as they started to work together they started loving it. They were torn. It was cool to see the audience get torn wanting Josephine to stay but wanting Clarke to have her body back. They've been so kind and amazing over social media and and I love it. Everyone's been so great.

MM: That's great to hear because I know with a lot of villains in the past seasons, no one was really rooting for them and awaited their demise. It's a change of pace to see that struggle where you wanted Josephine to get the hell out but at the same time you don't want her to leave.

ST: I hear a lot of people asking 'How can they bring her back, how can she still be alive and Clarke also be alive? That needs to happen.' That's fun.

MM: Definitely. I was just talking to Sachin [Sahel] about a spinoff and we were talking about a prequel to the end of the world and what happened before it. We saw your character in a diner which is so different from what we see, so we think it'd be cool to go back in time and see Josephine before she went to Sanctum and all the characters where they were before. You never know. It could happen!

ST: Yeah, you never know. You never know. And I think that was such a treat. You don't get to see too much of that in the show and you get to see pre-everything that's happened. It was fun to be a part of that.

MM: No, I totally agree. And obviously, Josephine is a smart cookie. Were there any vocabulary terms as Josephine that really stumped you? Did you learn something new while playing this witty villain?

ST: YES. Everything! *[Laughs]* It was one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs I've had thus far. The dialogue- she doesn't shut up, so I had to learn a lot of dialogue and she's not questioning a single thing that comes out of her mouth so it's all said with insane confidence. There was one day I showed up on a set and I didn't have many lines that day and then all of a sudden I did and it was like 'oh it's a sonic anomaly' and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah and then I go 'wait. what am I saying I don't even-' so yeah of course it was so hard and it was so fun though and it ended up working out so well. It was such a fun challenge and I learned, I learned a little bit of Mandarin, I learned a little bit of German, I learned a little bit of Spanish, I learned so much.

MM: Get to do a little bit of everything while working.

ST: All the science - There was a lot of researching *[laughs]*.

MM: No doubt about it. Fans are really adamant on figuring out who came up with Josephine's iconic hair twirl. Was that a higher up choice or something that you and Eliza [Taylor] did to distinguish Josephine's personality from Clarke's?

ST: I showed up on set and I didn't even really know that there were seven versions of me or however many there were. Eventually I thought 'oh this is where the story's going! Oh, I'm sociopath! Ah, ok!' which is another really cool thing because I got to find out as the audience did. That detail was Jason [Rothenberg], Jason said we need some characteristics that would be a giveaway. You see Clarke use her right hand and she's left-handed. So it started off as a giveaway and ended up being an iconic thing and I loved it so much, so I tried to incorporate it when she would get excited and when she would get nervous.

MM: It's a great distinguishing characteristic. I think that's probably the most well-known one that people attribute to telling the difference between the two and how to tell who's running what in terms of the body-swapping.

ST: Yeah, there's the hair twirl, there's the smirks, there's the eye-rolls, the cheeky attitude. All of that. She was fun.

MM: And now, can you describe Josephine in three emojis?

ST: Three emojis? The first one that comes to my mind is the purple smiling devil. Maybe a bloody syringe. Lets go with the heart eyes because she's just so in love with Gabriel and she has a big heart. So heart eyes, smiley devil, and the blood syringe.

MM: Syringe. Can't go wrong with all those options. You mentioned she's a sociopath. Do you believe that Josephine lost her humanity throughout this journey, whether it was watching her stalker kill himself, her dad murdering her and her people, at what point do you think she turned into one or was she always one?

ST: No, I think we see clearly that Josephine was a pretty regular girl who was living her life and talking about her classes and her teachers and then I think her lack of compassion and her sociopathic tendencies is definitely a result of Russell and Gabriel experimenting with her and it failing over and over again. Her coming back to life and having to relive the trauma with seeing her stalker committing suicide in front of her and seeing herself get murdered by her own father multiple times before it worked. I think that definitely took away parts of her humanity and she was definitely a result of that. But she never thought that, she never thought she was anything but perfect.

MM: Right, she's thinking 'nothing's wrong with me. I'm just living my best life over here, over and over again.'

ST: Exactly. Yeah, she was.

MM: Do you think she ever forgave her father for what he did? How do you get through that trauma and reliving it every time you come back?

ST: I think she did. I think she 100% forgave her father because it wasn't his fault and she wrote the book on what happened. She's not one to hold a grudge, she just wanted to look deeper into it and figure out why and she wanted to do the research behind it and it created a really cool dynamic with her father because he didn't mean to do it obviously, it was a result of the eclipse and she knew that and wrote a book about it and she wanted to just get better from it. It really shows why her father has so much guilt and he's willing to do anything for her and bring her back again and again. I think it peaked her interest more than anything. At first, it was crazy and hard to see, but I do think she forgave her father because you see their relationship and how quite lovely it is. They're very similar I think. She would do the same thing.

MM: And after those multiple lifetimes you kind of have to forgive, right? Forgive and forget and try to move on.

ST: She knows she's done some pretty bad things too.

MM: If you were given the chance at immortality in real life would you take it and what would you do with it?

ST: Would I take it? No, I wouldn't. Too much pressure. I don't think I would take it, I really don't. Unless I could figure out world peace, I think everyone has their time on this planet for a reason and I believe everything happens for a reason and when your time is up, your

time is up.

MM: Right, definitely. That added pressure and also not being able to share it with people you love, I mean as you continued they wouldn't be here with you anymore.

ST: Exactly, it would be painful. Josephine and Sara Thompson would not be best friends [laughs].

MM: Definitely not like your character at all. A lot of people wanted to know if you could have taken anything from Josephine's wardrobe what would you have taken?

ST: Oh, I love that one. Her leather jacket of course.

MM: Can't go wrong with leather.

ST: It's amazing. It's iconic, it's her. I wore it everyday on set and I wondered 'how do I keep this?' So yeah, it would be her leather jacket for sure.

MM: I'd take that too. I love leather jackets.

ST: Pretty badass. Me too.

MM: They just bring everything together.

ST: Yep, I agree.

MM: I like to throw in my signature question into all of my interviews- but if you were to construct a donut based off of Josephine's personality, what kind of donut would it be and what kind of toppings would be on it?

ST: Wow, ok, I think it would be a glazed donut. It would be sweet and glazed, everyone's classic favorite, but there would be some paprika, cayenne, lemon, something a little spicy on there, and then maybe some candy. [Laughs] I hate myself for saying this, maybe those lollipops with the bugs in the middle, some candied insects sprinkled on top. She would just be so into that... she's a little sweet, she's a little spicy, and she just loves her insects.

MM: She needs a little bit of that earthy feel to her donut.

ST: [laughs] She would dissect it.

MM: I also want to take a minute to acquaint the readers with you as a person. You have a competitive dance background, have your claws in the photoshoot world, amongst other things, how have your past experiences shaped your work as an actor?

ST: Well, I was a dancer from 3 to 18. Once a dancer, always a dancer. It was my whole entire life, I was heavily competitive and traveled the world with that, so I think definitely dancing has just helped me immensely with my movement and my breathing and my ability to pick up choreography, especially for *The 100*. With our fight scenes, it's similar to a dance. With photos, just knowing where the camera is, being comfortable with it and I brought my eye rolls into it, too. My everyday eye rolls. I finally got to show the world.

MM: Right, it's universal, you can use it in anything.

ST: Exactly.

MM: And you've done a few projects other than *The 100* with Richard Harmon and you have an upcoming feature called *The Return*, can you talk a little bit about that and when the viewers might be able to anticipate that release?

ST: I did two with Ricahrd. I did *I Still See You* with Richard Harmon and Bella Thorne and I did *The Return* with Richard. *The Return* should be out in the New Year, I believe. I play Beth, Richard, who plays Roger's girlfriend. And we return to his hometown when his father passes, and we discover that his childhood horrors haven't gone anywhere, they've stayed quite present and it's slightly jumpy and it's fun. Richard and I got really close on that film and it was actually when he found out that they were looking for this new character that he suggested the role to me. He said 'they're looking for this new character and I think you'd be really good for it.' And I sent in a tape and I ended up being really good for it. We were shooting *The Return* when I auditioned to be Josephine.

MM: Fans have an alternate reality to look forward to. In another life, Murphy and Josephine would be together!

ST: Exactly! Exactly they would, they're very, very similar, right? No wonder she's drawn straight to him and she's like 'hmm this guy could definitely be like me. Let's make him immortal too, he'll fall for it.'



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MM: You're attending Unity Days in January in Canada and your perks and meet and greet and all that fun stuff sold like hot cakes. How does that feel and what are you looking forward to most when going to that convention?

ST: It feels amazing. So exciting. Just wow, so many people want to meet me. I'm looking forward to meeting the fans and hearing what they have to say and what they wanted and what they thought of her. I loved playing her, I loved being her so just to meet these people who love her just as much as I do, we'll have some pretty interesting discussions, I'm sure. I'm really excited to just meet the people behind all of the love.

MM: Right? I definitely think that'll be a great experience and hopefully you'll come to more conventions in the future. We will try and will it.

ST: Manifest it.

MM: I'm just gonna put it out into the world and hopefully you know, you're just invited to everything.

ST: That's how it works!

MM: The fans really want to see a cameo of you in the final season. Let's hope for that in Season 7! Thank you for chatting with me today. I really enjoyed getting to know the character a little bit more!

ST: Thank you so much, it was awesome. You have some really good questions!

MM: Oh thank you, had to throw in my donut question- can't get through one of my interviews without it. People usually have fun with it.

ST: I'm sure you've never heard my answer before.

MM: No I haven't. I've gotten a hot Cheetos donut, I've gotten lizard meat and some other weird things.

ST: Ok, ok something in that area.

MM: We had one that was pleather, somebody put pleather on it with nuts and bolts. It can definitely get a little interesting.

ST: I like the one I chose for her. She's a little sweet. She's a little spicy. And she just loves insects.

MM: I know we gotta make it in real life. Well, thank you so much Sara, it's been a pleasure. Hopefully we'll see each other at a con one day.

ST: Perfect. Thank you so much.