

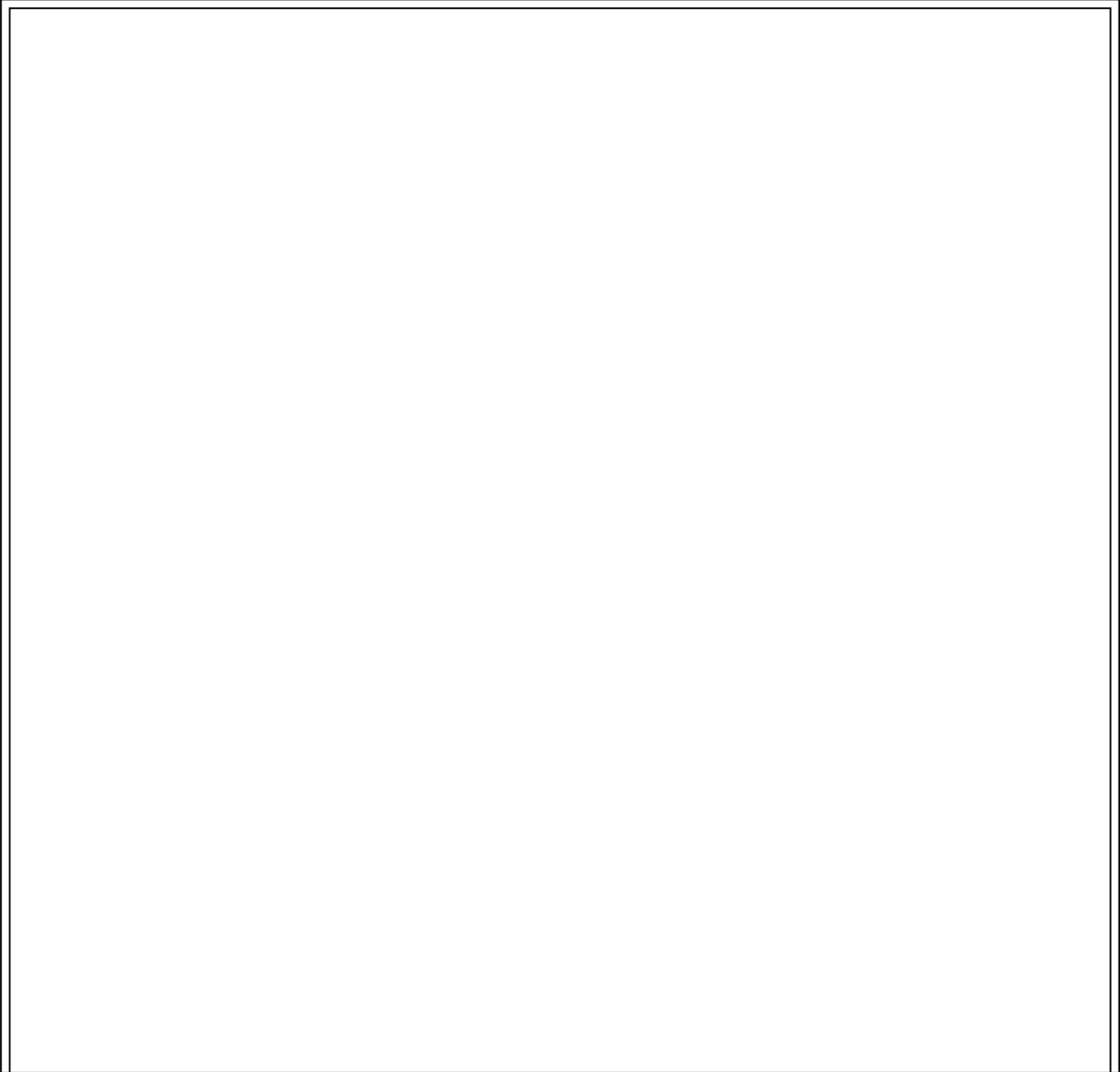
Interview, Portrait: Tom Felton on Draco Malfoy in ‘Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 26, 2011 - 10:20am

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CHICAGO – Playing Draco Malfoy, a less-than-savory counterpoint to the heroics of Harry Potter in the film series just completed with “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2,” would presumably be difficult. Tom Felton will have none of that, he is an exceptionally personable bloke, and a deep admirer of the Potter phenomenon.

Tom Felton was born in London, and began acting when he was eight years old. He started playing Draco at age 13 with “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone,” and has evolved with the character and the series, culminating in the recently released “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2.” Although somewhat of a “school bully” at Hogwarts, it was Felton’s attention to character that made Draco come alive and honored J.K Rowling’s philosophy in accordance with the Harry Potter books.





Done with Draco: Tom Felton in Chicago, July 22, 2011
Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

HollywoodChicago.com got a chance to sit down with Tom Felton, and take his portrait, in the midst of the publicity storm of Deathly Hallows. He spoke about his most famous character, where he is going from here – including the upcoming film “Rise of the Planet of the Apes” – and how it feels to be in the eye of the Potter storm.

HollywoodChicago.com: You’ve played enough of different characters now to get a sense of how to challenge yourself as an actor. Is it more fun to play someone who is not nice like Draco or a more benign or good character?

Tom Felton: I find it easier, more fun and more challenging at the same time to actually play someone as far opposite to myself as possible. I find the closer the character is to myself, the closer I question what he would do or how he would say it. I’m also very critical about it, I look back and I think ‘oh, that’s terrible’ [laughs], but when the character is very strong minded, Draco is an example of someone who is defined like that as a character, it does make it a lot easier, and a lot more fun.

HollywoodChicago.com: What side of your own personality did you have to access to play a bad character like Draco and did you sometimes find him hard to shake off at the end of the day?

Felton: I hope not, I hope he didn’t reflect on my day-to-day life too much. [laughs] Not really. The only thing I could channel when I started playing Draco is that I had three brothers who gave me quite a bit of stick over the years, I was used to being at the bottom of the pecking order. Maybe I used some of that frustration, I’m not sure.

HollywoodChicago.com: The Potter films were cutting edge as far as using technology to build their world. What moment in the film series really impressed you after you saw the finished result versus when you saw it being built and acted in front of a green screen?

Felton: Every year we would look at a set and say, ‘this doesn’t look like much,’ and then the production would make it incredible. Especially in the last film, there was a scene we were all doing for awhile where something was burning down. There was a little fire on the day, bits of fire, but when we played it back it looked like napalm across the entire set. You look back on that and you think that’s cool.

Even better was the flying stuff. Because actually you’re just sitting motionless, thinking this is crazy. Then you look back at the finished result and say, ‘look at me, I’m flying!’ [laughs]

HollywoodChicago.com: Was it difficult as a child going back into the public eye after the film exploded into popularity? Did you or do you have a problem with people calling you Draco instead of Tom?

Felton: No, it kind of comes with the territory, doesn't it? What's weird is once they call me Draco, and I say 'hi, I'm Tom, nice to meet you,' but they still call me Draco. They don't want to hear that my name is Tom, they want to keep me in character. [laughs] It wasn't even bad when I was younger, because I was under the radar and went to a normal school and managed to retain as much normality as possible. The only time we really noticed it is when we went abroad to new places and everywhere people were familiar with the films. That freaked us out a little bit.

HollywoodChicago.com: What is the most surreal thing that has happened to you – either a fan incident or a weird event – in relationship to you being part of the Potter universe?

Felton: It's hard to pick one, really. [laughs] There was the first time we went to Japan and they closed the airport, we felt like The Beatles. It was a bit ridiculous. It's only when you realize what you're involved with that it becomes like that, otherwise it's just a surreal, normal, day-to-day life.



Jason Isaacs as Lucius Malfoy and Tom Felton as Draco in 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1'

Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

HollywoodChicago.com: Your colleague Daniel Radcliffe has taken a sharply different direction after Potter, appearing in a musical. What type of role would you like to challenge yourself with to prove your different talents in the business? Would you like to do stage work?

Felton: Definitely. Daniel has energy for years over me, and he's a great singer/dancer. When you're watching the show you see him for about thirty seconds and everyone claps and says, 'look it's Harry Potter.' And then it's all forgotten, it's just an American guy singing, dancing and doing his thing. He's fantastic in it, and I hope to do something similar.

I want to do theater, TV, even getting behind the scenes as well, writing and producing, getting things off the ground.

HollywoodChicago.com: Since you went from the Potter series to another special effects film, 'Rise of the Planet of the Apes,' were you able to give your fellow performers some tips on 'green screen' acting?

Felton: Actually it was very different. In Potter, everything is real and wrapped around a green screen, so everything in the distance is added later. In Planet of the Apes, everything was a real set, and all the monkey characters were humans that they were going to paint as monkeys later. It was kind of like the other way around, I got to see both ends of the spectrum. They are both equally fun.

HollywoodChicago.com: Given that you and J.K. Rowling know more about Draco than any other people on earth...

Felton: I dare not agree with that, there are some pretty keen fans out there. They called me out on a few things a few times. [laughs]

HollywoodChicago.com: Okay, but where would you have liked the character to have gone if you were creating an alternate Draco universe?

Felton: I wouldn't change it, I really struggle to think about it as something else. But you know, who doesn't want an epic finale? I see Draco standing up to Voldemort and having a punch-up of some sort, maybe Harry can become involved and it could be a three-way. [laughs] No, no this is going crazy now, I'm not sure quite what I'm talking about. [laughs]

He’s quite a scared guy, poor Draco, kind of terrified of everything, so it would have been nice to see him buck up for once and man up and have a rut. But I shan’t hold that against him for sure.

HollywoodChicago.com: In your opinion, if you had real personalities like Draco and Harry Potter, and they were put into the real world without magical powers, who do you think would be more of a winner given our current society?

Felton: It would be the same. Draco is the snob, who has been shoved into private school, and has never had a day of love and affection in his life. It’s funny, but he is the complete opposite of Harry in that respect. He has parents, but no guidance, love or friendship. Harry has no parents, but has every possible loyal friend around him and every possible influence. They are two sides of a coin, but I think those boys are exceptionally relative in Muggle society, as well as the wizardly one.

HollywoodChicago.com: Finally, what is your greatest single personal memory during all those eight films...which film was it and what happened?

Felton: I’d love to have a soundbite for you here, it’s a struggle to pick one thing. There are funny ones, times working with the senior actors and being exceptionally nervous to forgetting lines that at a young age is somewhat embarrassing. But overall the main thing that comes out of it is the people that I had a chance to work with, not only the cast, but the 500 odd crew members over the years, who worked just as hard, if not harder, than us.

HollywoodChicago.com: Then what was the last day on the set like, that last final moment working together?

Felton: Very British, it very was anti-climatic, ‘thank you very much, thank you very much, see you later.’ No one knew what to say, there were no words for the moment. Everybody was looking forward to the day and also dreading it. We were proud and excited, overall I think we were happy that we made it and succeeded in doing what we hoped to do. That was the main emotion.

“Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2” continues its run everywhere. Featuring Tom Felton, Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson, Ralph Fiennes, Michael Gambon, and Alan Rickman. Adapted by Steve Kloves and directed by David Yates. Rated “PG-13”



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