



>BRAWL **Q+A**

THE
WRITING'S
ON
THE
WALL

And it's got **Kaitlyn's** name all over it. Here, the Divas Champ takes a trip in the way-back machine to her first days in *NXT*, making out with Dolph Ziggler (don't remind AJ), and getting detention for a pantsing incident.

BY JOHN MIHALY PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON TANAKA BLANEY

WHEN it comes to the Divas Division, how do you want to leave your mark, so to speak?

I call myself the “Hybrid Diva.” I’m kind of a mixture of all the different women that we have on the roster. I’ve got this tomboy-ish thing about me, but I can be a “girl,” and I can wear heels, though I don’t like to. I don’t fit any sort of mold. I know a lot of the girls don’t these days, but I truly want to be the first Hybrid Diva. It’s what I want to be known as when they look back in the WWE history books.

Which high-school cliques did you fall into, and would we ever see you deface public property by spray-painting your name over it?

Back in high school, I was such a troublemaker. I was always pulling pranks and pantsing people in public. I was such a pantsner; I actually got five days of in-school suspension for pantsing a guy. I had a Saturday detention, a four-hour detention just like in *The Breakfast Club*, with all of my friends. But I was also a jock. I was captain of the varsity soccer team for three years. And then I was also a nerd, too: I was in Chess Club.

Most people forget that you were a last-minute addition to your season of NXT. Take us back to how it all transpired. What happened?

It was a Friday, and I was driving to the gym after practice at FCW. I’d been there for four weeks and hadn’t even been in my first match yet. I didn’t have a pair of boots, and I didn’t have a dress or real wrestling gear. I got a call, and they said, “Hey! Guess what? You’re going to make your TV debut in a few days.” I had to get on a plane and go straight to my first live *Raw* that Monday, and then I debuted on *SmackDown*. I only had two days, so I literally had no time when I got home. I didn’t know how to dress. I wish I could show you some of the stuff I bought that first day.

The WWE Universe loves underdogs. Do you feel that term applies to your career thus far?

Oh, absolutely. That’s like my life story, as far as WWE goes. I was the last-minute replacement, and I had some really big shoes to fill. Like, literally giant shoes to fill. Even when I won, I sensed that some people still didn’t feel like I deserved it as much as someone like AJ. But I always felt like nobody ever expected anything from me, and I always felt this need to prove myself. I was stuck behind the scenes for nearly two years, just learning and gathering advice and experience, and then, when it was finally my opportunity—when I won the No. 1 Contender spot in the Battle Royal—that was the beginning of everything.

When did you first start feeling comfortable in a WWE ring? Has that even happened yet?

I definitely feel more comfortable now just because I’ve been in the ring and gotten more experience



“AS SOON AS I GET IN FRONT OF THE WWE UNIVERSE, EVERYTHING DISAPPEARS, AND IT’S LIVE, AND KIND OF A SURREAL MOMENT.”

working live events and pay-per-views. But there’s always fear. Sometimes I get in Gorilla before I go out and I think, “Why did I choose this? What am I doing? I don’t want to do it!” And then we’re 10 seconds away, and it becomes, “Oh, I gotta do it.” But as soon as I get in front of the WWE Universe, everything kind of disappears, and it’s live, and it’s just kind of a surreal moment.

What came first, being comfortable in the ring or being comfortable backstage?

[Laughs.] They’re two different beasts. I can have a conversation with anyone and I’m very good with relating to a lot of people. So I think I felt a little more comfortable backstage first. But to be fair, I don’t think I’ll ever be fully comfortable back there because you’re at work, and you never know what’s going to happen and who’s going to be doing what. If you’re wearing an amazing outfit one day and someone sees you they will say, “Whoa, that’ll be your gear.” That’ll happen. That’s happened to people before. It’s essentially, “you’re

going to wrestle in that.” So you can’t ever completely be comfortable backstage, but I will say it’s definitely more nerve-racking being in a ring in front of thousands of people.

Speaking of attire...ever thought of joining The Shield? They could use a little more diversity in terms of their membership, and you’ve certainly got the look. Or did they steal it from you?

Yeah—they definitely did steal my look. Everyone says I stole their look—no, they stole mine. So I don’t feel like they want me to join them, but pretty soon they will realize what I bring to the table. But what’s funny is, Rollins has my hair and Reigns uses a version of the Spear. Ambrose hasn’t swiped anything yet. It’s just like, “What are you doing?” They’re taking my identity, or trying to, but they will never have it.

Do you ever talk to your Divas Title when no one is around? And, if so, does it talk back?

I do. I have been known to talk to the title, especially when I first got it. It goes everywhere with me, it literally never leaves my side. Maybe I take it

in the shower with me, you don’t know! We’re kind of inseparable, so when I’m really nervous or have a big match coming up, my title definitely lends an ear. And what I say is between my title and me.

What’s going through your mind when you hit the Spear? Is there a noise you’re hoping to hear from your opponent?

It’s like the breath leaving their body. [Laughs, somewhat maniacally.] The moment that I have the opportunity and know that I can hit it, it’s silence—I don’t hear anything else. I can’t hear the crowd, I can’t hear them, and I just hear silence. And that’s pretty much when I know.

Both you and AJ have smooched Dolph Ziggler on WWE programming. Have you two ever compared notes about The Show Off?

That’s something we don’t talk about...ever. It’s like the elephant in the room. My policy is, “You can have that.” But I won’t say a word because honestly, I don’t know what she’ll do.

What is more nerve-racking, making out with someone on live television, or the pressure of putting on a great performance in the ring?

Making out’s a piece of cake. Definitely.

So when was the last time you made someone of the opposite gender cry?

Does that mean a man or a little boy? Not sure if there’s a huge difference really. They’re all little boys. It was probably during one of those pantsing episodes. I think there maybe three real men left in the world at this point. And one of them is the Dos Equis guy, and one of them is Hugh Jackman.