

OLIVIA HOLT

Welcome to the marvelous world of Olivia Holt. The name probably rings a bell because the young actress currently stars as Marvel's Tandy Bowen (aka Dagger) in Freeform's hit series, *Cloak & Dagger*. The compelling comic book adaptation follows two superpowered teenagers from vastly different backgrounds, whose destinies intertwine as they discover a mysterious connection between their abilities. While Holt is part of the sprawling Marvel world, we think that the 21-year-old is a marvel herself—evolving from small-town Southern girl to multi-talented Hollywood starlet, while embracing every moment along the way!

WRITTEN BY SANDY AZIZ | PHOTOGRAPHED BY RAUL ROMO

Actress/singer, Olivia Holt grew up in a small town outside of Memphis, Tennessee. Southaven, which is technically located in Mississippi, is a tight-knit community where "everyone knows everyone," according to Holt. Her new home of LA, however, is notoriously known for being very different.

"It was definitely a challenge, for me and my whole family," Olivia says of her transition to life in L.A. "We had to adjust to a whole new environment and lifestyle, but we just dove right into it all. Some days were a lot harder than others—I still sometimes get homesick—but I love the life I've made for myself in L.A. too."

Despite relocating across the country, Holt still embraces her roots, citing Memphis BBQ as her favorite Southern cuisine. When she's unable to indulge, due to her limited meat intake,

she turns to "any fried junk food" for her guilty pleasure.

Holt's authentic, contagious energy has undoubtedly translated into her work. Before she took on the emotionally complex role of Marvel's Tandy Bowen, she most notably played Kim in the Disney XD series, *Kickin' It*. More recently, she starred opposite Ross Lynch in the teen comedy film, *Status Update*, featuring a magical application that brings social media statuses to reality.

And, speaking of status updates, Holt expressed to us that she has always had "mixed feelings" about social media. While she acknowledges that "there are an equal amount of pros and cons" to social media's effects on people, Holt specifically notes the benefits that social media provides, such as educating people on what is occurring around the world and its ability to "easily connect [us] with each other and have a whole different community of family and friends through our device." ▶

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The connectivity that technology provides certainly comes in handy for Olivia, with many of her friends being scattered around the US. When it comes to managing her work/life balance, Holt says, "[it's] a big challenge in its own, for sure."

"But my friends and I make it work," she explains. "I'm not the only busy one in my circle, my friends are all busy doing really amazing things, so we all find and make the time to see each other whenever we can."

Holt is also mindful of the people she surrounds herself with. When it comes to surviving in the entertainment business, Olivia has learned the importance of protecting her energy and space. "This industry is filled with so much competition," she divulges. "Always trust your instincts when letting people into your circle, because you never know what [their] agendas are."

And just in case you're wondering what it takes to be in Olivia's inner circle— "loyalty, respect, support, and a kickass sense of humor" are the characteristics she values most.

Given the nature of her work, Holt relies on those closest to her to keep her grounded. But these days, she's constantly on the go. Currently battling feelings of jet lag, Olivia reveals to us that six days is the longest she's been home since September. "But I'm fine," she says, laughing.

Holt is always up for the challenge. There's even a certain tenacity in the way she approaches her roles. Unfamiliar with the *Cloak & Dagger* comics when she initially auditioned for Tandy Bowen, Holt immediately dove into them when she booked the part.

Marvel's *Cloak & Dagger*, which airs on the Freeform network, has attracted a reputation for digging deep into real sociological and, at times, political topics. When discussing Season 2 of the series, Holt emphasizes that she is "very grateful to be part of a show with such great storytelling and a message behind each episode and character."

Her recollection of securing the role was that it all felt "very surreal." Of course, this seems like a fitting way to chronicle any Marvel-related masterpiece. When we want to dig deeper into the details of her role on the show, Olivia doesn't hold back. Citing it as her most challenging performance to date, Holt reveals that Tandy Bowen is a complex, multi-dimensional character to play.

"Tandy has a lot of layers," she says. "She's not just one note, which I love about her, but she also has a very cynical side, which is sometimes a very challenging headspace to be in, for me as an individual. But Tandy beats to the rhythm of her own drum and there is something so unique about that."

And I think that's what helps me push through all of the cynicism."

Given Holt's life mantra of not taking life too seriously, it is understandable that she would feel challenged by Tandy's personality, at times.

We ask how she keeps her spirits high, and she offers these wise words: "Have fun with what [you] do or end up doing. Be present and embrace every moment. It matters in the long run, and you'll be happy you did."

For now, the 21-year-old's priority is acting, but she has always simultaneously had another true love—music. Since releasing her first single in 2017, Holt tells us she wants to continue writing and recording "as much as possible."

"I love it," she says. "I love music, man. The effect it has on me is like no other. And I just want to soak up as much knowledge as I can and keep evolving as an artist."

We intend to watch—or rather listen to—this space for what musical melody Holt graces with us next.

If you have not seen *Cloak & Dagger*, be sure to check it out. But for now, we leave you with a few of Olivia Holt's current marvels:

Santa Fe is where Holt would teleport right now if she could because it's one of her "favorite places in the world." Even though she only spent a day and a half there, she described it as "magical."

Painting and Netflix is what you will find Holt doing when she is not acting or singing. She loves to paint, despite feeling like she is "not very good at it."

Sex Education is the last thing Holt watched on Netflix and she gives it a 10/10 rating because it is "witty and charming."

Maren Morris' new album *Girl* is what Holt is currently listening to.

Olivia's Perfect Day consists of waking up, working on her dream project, going out for drinks with friends, and finally heading home to eat vegan cookie dough in bed.

Simplicity is Holt's token go-to look, consisting of a "white tee, pair of denim jeans, and some sneakers."

Austin, Texas is what she calls a "rad city" and she loved everything about it—the culture, food, and people, and she plans on going back (hopefully for SXSW). "It's always a good time!"

Follow Olivia on Instagram & Twitter @Olivia_Holt! ■

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