

SATI

DA

December 18-24, 2004

ma

Panto's Bad Girl

Why Nicole Faraday
loves playing it nasty



Good, the bad and the lovely.

She's best known as a murderous cocaine dealer in TV's *Bad Girls* and is now playing the evil Morgan Le Fay in Norwich Theatre Royal's panto but, says **Sarah Hardy**, you'd be hard pressed to find a more lovely girl in real-life than Nicole Faraday.

SHE'S THE DOCTOR'S DAUGHTER FROM DORSET WHO SHOT TO FAME as the drug-dealing murderess in *Bad Girls*, the hit ITV1 series that returns next year for yet another run.

Nicole Faraday is very much the up-and-coming young actress and, with her sunny personality, it's highly ironic that she often plays dodgy characters.

"Yes, I expect lots of booing and hissing from everyone in Norwich. I love being a panto baddie, I don't think you can ham it up enough! I'm not sure why I'm always the villain but it lets me get everything out of my system."

Nicole grew up in Swanage, Dorset, with her brother and sister. "My dad's a consultant, my mum and sister are nurses, and my brother's a fireman so they are all in public services - and then there's me," she laughs.

It sounds a lovely, happy childhood, with much swimming in the sea off Studland Bay and birthday parties on the beach, with Nicole laughing: "I'm a mermaid, really!"

Although now based in London, she returns to Dorset on a regular

"And I love panto, you get such a great reaction from the audience, especially when they start to join in. I played the wicked queen in *Snow White in Chatham in Kent* last year - that was great fun."

She says: "But obviously telly is great, it raises your profile and helps you do other things. And, yes, if I was offered a part in a soap, I'd leap at it. I know that they are incredibly hard work with little room for mistakes but it would be great experience for me."

Nicole became a household name by appearing in two series of *Bad Girls*, which also stars Rada-trained Suffolk actress Helen Fraser as *Body Bags*, as Snowball Merriman, a glamorous murderess with a love of cocaine.

"It was a great role and fun to play someone very different to myself. Although I didn't actually visit a prison myself, you are given a lot to read, a complete book, really, so I became very familiar with prison procedures - and drug habits!" she says.

Nicole would have been happy to stay



Nicole Faraday, above, became a household name by appearing in *Bad Girls*, set in a women's prison. Below, she plays Snowball Merriman, a glamorous murderess with a love of cocaine. Left: Helen Fraser as Body Bags in several episodes of hospital drama series *Body Bags*, the locum who filled

Christine Stephen-Daly) who was briefly in prison over a murder.

"Again, it was lovely to play someone very different to Snowball and I certainly felt more at home in a medical world."

Nicole hopes that her character could



Nicole Faraday, above right
Brian Hibbard as Dame Noddy
at Norwich Theatre Royal

panto first

It is the first time that the Theatre Royal in Norwich has staged *Sleeping Beauty*. Press officer Kevin Sides says it follows the traditional storyline, with a few extra characters thrown in for good measure.

"Well, it's set in Camelot so you have King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, Merlin, and of course, Morgan Le Fay.

"It's co-written by Richard Gauntlett, who usually plays the Dame but is actually appearing in the *Lion King* in the West End, and Rikki Jay, who's now taking part in his seventh panto here in Norwich."

He adds: "There are lots of topical jokes, local references – especially about football and Ipswich Town!"



"Yes, I was always first in the sea," she remembers but quickly rejects any suggestions of a Christmas

"The show Fyne, and theatre b In case her own t you shooc Lady in