



That's the key to his success.

Why do you do a lot of your own stunts?

I can represent myself best for real. I like to do stunts. In *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* I had a fight scene with Jude Law. The producer knew I was a little crazy, so he pulled me aside and said, "Don't hit Jude's face, because we have to do close-ups later." Jude didn't know martial arts. I was just learning. We did it a couple times, and I was being gentle. Jude says, "Bai Ling, are you okay? Just hit me. Really, it's fine." So on the next take, boom! I hit him on the forehead. I said, "I'm so sorry." He was so cool, he just brushed it off and said, "It's okay. Let's do it again!" I thought the producer was going to fire me!

Don't you worry about getting hurt?

I don't think that way, but I should. I was hit and almost killed by a wild leopard while filming in Budapest. I love wild animals. There was only one leopard in the world they said was trained enough to be in the film. He was huge and angry. I was so excited because I feel that in a previous life I was like that. That is why I have my cheetah tattoo.

The rehearsal day was cold, and I was all bundled in layers of clothes. I was sitting with this leopard and playing with him. The trainer said, "He's never been this friendly with anyone." I spent time with him, and they were convinced that we could work together. When the shooting day came, they gave me this thin red dress that is sexier than what I'm wearing now. It had feathers everywhere. I came on set. The leopard was unleashed, and something was making him uncomfortable. He started to come at me and growl. Because he smelled me. He came right between my legs and smelled. Then he roared up and hit me. I fell to the floor as the trainer rushed in and pulled him away. He could have taken my head off!

Is there anything you won't do on film?

I have to be careful with guns because that is something too dangerous. You can't really play around. I was in the film *The Crow*. That was tragic what happened to Brandon Lee. I saw it. I learned from that. You have to be really careful.

What else do you remember about making *The Crow*?

Of course I remember the coldness and difficulty and struggle after losing Brandon Lee. His death was so sad because he was planning to get married the day after we finished filming. We only had eight days left. Everything was planned. Because we worked so closely, I felt so bad. When we came back to continue filming after he died, I saw him there onscreen. I felt like he was alive, but just took a different form. That made me happy. The movie made him immortal. That experience taught me to treasure moments you are given.

What is your favorite film?

If I have to pick, my (continued on page 57)