

Kelly Rutherford On Her Divorce: “The One Thing I Know Is That My Kids Are Loved and That We’re Working It Out”



By [Whitney Johnson](#)

Gossip Girl fans recognize Kelly Rutherford as prim and proper socialite Lily van der Woodsen, a character who captured our hearts despite her shortcomings. You could fault Lily for a number of things but being a protective parent wasn't one of them. When speaking about her character on the show, the actress says, "It was a lot of fun. She was a very different type of mother than we're used to seeing on television."

Now, Rutherford is tackling an even more challenging role in Lifetime's *A Sister's Nightmare*, which premieres this weekend. The blonde beauty plays Jane Rydert, a police officer whose life changes drastically when her older sister Cassidy (Natasha Henstridge) shows up after being released from a psychiatric hospital. Unable to convince anyone that her sister is still dangerous, Jane must protect her niece Emily (Peyton List), who she's been raising for the past 16 years.

Rutherford was initially attracted to the movie because it was "very different than what I had done before. It was nice to do something that was a big contrast to *Gossip Girl* and the character that I played for six years – to shake things up a little bit."

And, of course, the cast is always an important piece of any project. For this role, she reunited with one of her love interests on *Gossip Girl*, Matthew Settle. "It was wonderful to work together again," she exclaims. "Natasha and Peyton are incredible too. They made it very believable for me. It was really a lovely experience."

Ultimately, though, the ending hooked her. "There's this huge twist that you don't see coming. It made me really like the script," the Kentucky native shares. "It was really fun to play a character who ends up being totally different than you thought."

Naturally, being a parent herself – to six-year-old son Hermés and four-year-old daughter Helena – impacts the way she approaches each project. For Rutherford, her kids are always her priority. "I do my best to work around them," she explains. "It all goes by so fast that you don't have time for guilt. When I'm with my kids, I want to be totally present. And when I'm working, I want to know that my kids are attended to and happy."

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Parents

It's no surprise that motherhood has changed the single mom. "I learn something new every day. I want to be a better example for my children. It's a different type of pressure to be a good person when you have little eyes looking up at you!" she says with a laugh.

Part of being the best mother she can be is going with the flow. "As a parent, you realize that every day brings new things." This summer brought a lot of fun for the family of three. "I asked my kids what they wanted to do, and they said, 'We just want to be with you.' So that's what we did! We went to the Hamptons for a few weekends. We did everything we love to do in New York City too: go to the museums, ride scooters in the park. They took swimming and piano lessons. My daughter took ballet and French classes."

Unfortunately, Rutherford has been dealing with some more serious problems. In June, she filed for bankruptcy due to financial problems stemming from her lengthy custody battle with Daniel Giersch. Her ex-husband, who resides in Monaco, was barred from returning to the United States – which means that Rutherford must travel back and forth to see her children.

"It's not always easy, that's for sure," she says of her divorce. "The biggest thing is to stay positive when you talk about the other parent. You have to be honest; you don't want to lie, but you want to say it in a way so it doesn't have an edge. My kids really pick up on whether I'm okay emotionally. As long as I'm okay, they're okay. If I lose it, who do they have to look to for strength?"

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The actress adds, "When they have questions, I sit down and answer them. I try to be as kind and respectful of them as possible. I let them know that I don't always know either,

that I'm figuring it out too. The one thing I do know is that they're loved and that we're working it out. I encourage them to just enjoy every moment, whether they're with me or their dad."

Rutherford applies this philosophy to her own life as well. After a relaxing but busy summer, she's ready to step back into a role on primetime and is excited to be joining the cast of *Reckless*, a show premiering on CBS this fall.

Plus, she's considering expanding her work as an activist for custody issues into a book. "A few people are encouraging me, but I don't know if it's the right time yet. I'm just waiting to see how things play out." One thing's for sure: We'll be cheering for her every step of the way!

You can catch Rutherford on A Sister's Nightmare on Lifetime on Saturday, September 7th at 8 p.m. ET. You can also follow her on her personal site, <http://www.kellyrutherford.com/> or [Twitter](#) @KellyRutherford/ and www.facebook.com/thekellyrutherford?fref=ts!