

# TED LASSO

**ONE** of the many charming transformations *Ted Lasso* viewers enjoy is Rebecca Welton's evolution: when we meet her, she's an angry English football team owner who sabotages a clueless American coach, but she slowly comes to root for his success. No one was more surprised by how Rebecca blossoms into much more than a woman scorned than actress **Hannah Waddingham**. For the audition, she received "maybe two or three scenes from the first episode. I had no idea of the trajectory of Rebecca Welton."

By coincidence, playing Welton — whom the gossip press dubs "old Rebecca" when her loathsome ex-husband, Rupert (Anthony Head), takes up with a younger woman of the same name — allowed Waddingham to purge old memories while delivering a gut-punch of a performance.

"It's the only time ever where certain moments in my life have actually been used for the positive," she says. "I was in a verbally abusive relationship that I didn't clock for a long time, and finally this show comes along and is some kind of catharsis." Waddingham credits Head with taking "the bull by the horns — he wasn't afraid of being nasty onscreen, and it made my job much easier."

While coach Ted Lasso's boundless enthusiasm melts some of the ice around Rebecca's heart (Waddingham says the two characters are "absolutely each other's soulmates"), her unlikely friendship with spitfire Keeley Jones thaws the rest. Waddingham and costar Juno Temple have a similar connection in real life. "I said to her, 'It's like having a very, very learned unicorn on set.' She's just completely unique, that girl."

There is, however, one component of the show that doesn't sit close to home for Waddingham: she's not a fan of English football. "I just have no affinity with it at all," she says, laughing. — *Liane Starr*

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## Nice Queen

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