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Syrian refugee, deaf actor from Regina stars in new Netflix series



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WATCH ABOVE: Deaf actor from Regina stars in new Netflix series.

It's been a whirlwind few months for a young actor in Regina. Mustafa Alabssi stars in the recently released Netflix series *Black Summer*, an apocalyptic drama and spin-off of *Z Nation*.

However, it's the 19-year-old's story that's leaving a lasting impression on Hollywood.

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"My hope for the future would be that it's not impossible for deaf [people] to be involved in shows," Alabssi said through an interpreter.

Alabssi is originally from Syria, where he attended a deaf school and learned Syrian Sign Language, but his family was forced to flee to Jordan when war broke out in the country.

"There was no sign language in Jordan," said Alabssi. "People would just kind of point things at me."

He was unable to attend school in Jordan because he was deaf, so he worked as a janitor for three years to support his family before moving to Canada.

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Alabssi said the challenges didn't stop once he arrived in his new home.

He didn't know English, nor could he communicate in American Sign Language but he was determined to learn.

"I got here to Canada and really got to have deep communication and understanding of topics," said Alabssi.

With a passion for theatre, he joined Deaf Crows – a local performance group made up of members from Regina's deaf community.

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His teacher, Michelle Grodecki, says Alabssi doesn't need the Hollywood spotlight to shine.

"He's a natural born leader in our program," said Grodecki, who teaches in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program at Winston Knoll Collegiate. "He's always encouraging our students to never give up."

Alabssi's co-stars are also singing the young actors' praises.

Actor Jamie King, who stars in the series, said through social media that Alabssi "is representing the deaf community with incredible heart and fearless acting. He has shared lessons with us that will forever change us."

While Alabssi hopes to pursue a career in acting, his aspirations extend to audiences around the world.

"I hope that more people will begin to look for movies and like them because there are deaf people in them," said Alabssi.

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