



Jena of all

trades

Mojak Lehoko sits down with multi-talented **Jena Dover**, who boasts careers in modelling, acting and law.



Mojak Lehoko: Tell me, how has life been?

Jena Dover: Really good, but a juggle. I'm like the queen of slashies. You know, when someone is like, 'I do this and this and this'? I think I invented that.

ML: Really? You're the first ever?

JD: I think I came out of the womb deciding I was going to be a Jack of all trades and a master of none. [Laughs]

ML: [Laughing] Sweet. I see you are studying French. How is it going?

JD: Ja, really good. My fiancé is native French speaking, and I'm doing it for no other reason than to find out what he says about me over my head.

ML: Oh, really? I tried doing French at Wits Language School.

JD: That's where I'm doing it! I do two courses, one at Wits and the other at Wits Language School.

ML: We would go to class on a Saturday morning, but my brother and I would go out on the Friday night, and then it became a total disaster. Ja, so I've got the basics: 'Bonjour, ça va, très bien, je m'appelle Mojak.' I learnt how to count up

to 18 and then after that I was done.

JD: *Trés bien!* [Laughs]

ML: But it was a good time. So why law?

JD: I did a movie when I was 21. I had been in New York, where I was studying acting method at the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute, and then I went to LA and did a little improv course at The Groundlings. When I came back to South Africa, I went for my first audition for a movie. It was a movie about rugby, and I got the part. But the casting was so shocking.

ML: Is that the one with Mandoza?

JD: Ja...

ML: Bless you for making it through, hey.

JD: [Laughs] Thanks.

I think I cried into my pillow at night. It was my first gig, but everything was terribly planned, so I thought I should just give this up.

So I quickly ran to Wits and signed up for a law degree.

ML: Really? That was the vibe?

JD: That was the vibe. And then soon after that I did a bunch of commercials, and I started to build my confidence again. Then I booked *Scandal* with e.tv and one or two movies in between. And I've got to give credit to *Scandal* – after that I thought, Hang on, I can act. There is nothing like acting everyday to work at your craft. It's like exercise. I was also acting opposite Sello Ka-Ncube, who is amazing! He played my dad.

ML: That was great casting.

JD: But it was cool. It had a really nice fanbase, everyone was very supportive, and I really started to get the hang of things. That was when I started to feel like I could do this. But I had also gone three years into law when *Scandal* ended, and I had shot another movie, and I was like, you know what, I've just got to push through. →

