

# No Fear

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**Actress [AnnaSophia Robb](#) tackles the role of Bethany Hamilton—and the water**

**AnnaSophia Robb** calls herself a “surfer-in-progress.” But the 17-year-old star of *Soul Surfer*, the inspiring (and emotional) Bethany Hamilton biopic, has a real advantage over most newbies in the water—Hamilton happens to be the one teaching her how to surf. Says Robb, “She’s said to me, ‘I’m not a good teacher,’ but she really is! She’ll mess around with me, and she always pushes me to go for a bigger wave and chastises me if I don’t. I’ve learned so much from her, which I’ll keep with me for the rest of my life. I’ll always know how to catch a wave and keep from getting pounded.”

Telling the story of Hamilton’s shark attack and miraculous return to the water has taught Robb—best known for →



Bethany Hamilton gets shacked during the filming of her upcoming Hollywood bio, *Soul Surfer*.



her roles in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Bridge to Terabithia* and *Race to Witch Mountain*—a few other things as well, like how to overcome her own fears. Says Robb, “I remember hearing about her accident on the news. I was terrified of sharks, so it was like, ‘Oh my gosh, that’s so scary!’ But now of course Bethany gets back in the water, and any time we surf and I’m looking down wondering what’s there, she’s like, ‘Don’t look down. Just don’t.’ Which is the most amazing advice.”

For Hamilton, it was clearly never a question whether or not she’d surf again after a tiger shark bit her arm off at the age of 13. She says the most challenging part of her recovery was waiting three weeks for her stitches to heal before she could paddle out. Hamilton remembers, “My first time back in the water was so exciting! All my friends were there and I had been watching them surf for a while, and I just couldn’t wait any longer to get back out there and try! I was definitely scared that I wouldn’t be able to surf again, but I knew I had to because I love it so much. Once I caught that first wave, I was crying tears of joy—I felt like life could finally go back to being somewhat normal.”

Her “courage, strength and no-BS attitude” are what Robb says she most respects about Hamilton, and those attributes are definitely the heart and soul of this movie—along with some really kick-ass sequences in the waves. Hamilton did the surfing stunts herself, and while she hopes people walk away from the film realizing that “life’s not perfect, but through those imperfections, we really get the good stuff out of it,” she admits that the thing she’s most stoked about is how great the surfing scenes look. *Neha Gandhi*

→ *Soul Surfer* hits theaters  
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