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True GRIT

A world-renowned Oscar winner, KATE WINSLET's talents elicited awe in her Steve Jobs co-star Michael Fassbender. She talks to ANNABEL BROG about her 'girl crush' Shailene Woodley, seducing Liam Hemsworth and why, these days, she has nothing to lose

Photographs by CHRIS COLLS Styling by NATALIE BREWSTER



Previous page: Top
by Antonio Berardi;
earrings by Anita Ko.
This page: Jacket by
Altuzarra; shirt by
Valentino

The film is the Aaron Sorkin-written, Danny Boyle-directed, Michael-Fassbender-starring *Steve Jobs*. The role is that of Jobs' marketing guru, fiery Polish-Armenian-American Joanna Hoffman. No one has seen the script, but having heard about the project from her hairstylist, Kate Winslet wants in.

"Polish Armenian," she spits, really *spits*, "I can do that." So she phones up her agent and says, "Call Scott [Rudin, the producer], call Danny, call everyone."

Her agent calls and... Nothing. Silence. "They don't think I'm right for this part. I just wasn't entering their radar," says Winslet. "Which is really OK. Girl doesn't have an ego. Girl. Doesn't. Have. An. Ego. So Girl turns round to Husband and

"I wanted to FEEL I was going towards 40 having CHALLENGED myself and had as much fun as POSSIBLE"

says, 'Darling husband – this is lovely Ned [Rocknroll] – while I'm at work tomorrow please go to a wig shop, and it doesn't matter how s**t they are, get me three brown wigs.'"

The next evening, Winslet scrubs her face clean of makeup, styles one of the wigs into a Hoffman flick, takes a selfie and emails it to Rudin. There is nothing in the subject line, nothing in the body of the email, just this one photo of Winslet, in reading glasses and a cheap wig, throwing Hoffman-style shade at the camera. Six weeks later, she was on the set of *Steve Jobs*. "The best way to be is to have absolutely no ego," says Winslet. "Just go for it. I got myself a job that I really bloody wanted. This was: 'I ain't got nothing to lose, f**k it, just send the photo.' And it was *lovely* to be reminded of that feeling of early auditions, waiting for the phone to ring."

Twenty-three years into a stellar career (blowing up the box office in 1997's *Titanic*; winning an Academy Award for *The Reader* in 2008), Winslet has reached a point where it's *all* about nothing to lose.

“I feel like the past two years have been different for me, deliberately so,” she says. “I really wanted to mix it up a bit and feel that I was going full pelt towards 40 having done as much as I could: pushed myself, challenged myself, exhausted myself, had as much fun as possible. The last two years of my life have put a different sort of rocket fuel up my backside.”

It shows. In addition to *Steve Jobs*, you can catch Winslet as a “Russian-Israeli gangster moll” in crime thriller *Triple Nine* next March. Before that, she stars in this November’s dark fable, *The Dressmaker*, as Myrtle, a seamstress who returns to her Australian outback hometown to wreak revenge on the motley inhabitants who destroyed her childhood. As well as a finely tuned sense of vengeance (her first line in the movie: “I’m back, you b*****ds!”), Myrtle is a stone-cold, jaw-on-the-floor fox. And while Winslet is well versed in nude scenes, she has never yet played the vixen. So is she, at the magnificent age of 40, about to become a bona fide sex symbol?

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[being a sex symbol],
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Winslet cackles so hard she screams, “Don’t make me laugh, you’re hurting my neck.” We are outside her osteopath’s office, where she has booked herself an emergency appointment for a recurring back problem. “Are. You. Mad? No! I’ve had three children.” Which, as is evident from her scorching performance in *The Dressmaker*, is entirely irrelevant. She laughs again. “The idea is incredibly flattering, but that’s the [film] version of me. The real me... I’m certainly not against it, but it’s something I find more amusing than a triumph.”

Earlier this year, 37-year-old actress Maggie Gyllenhaal revealed she is considered too old – by Hollywood standards – to have on-screen sex with a 55-year-old



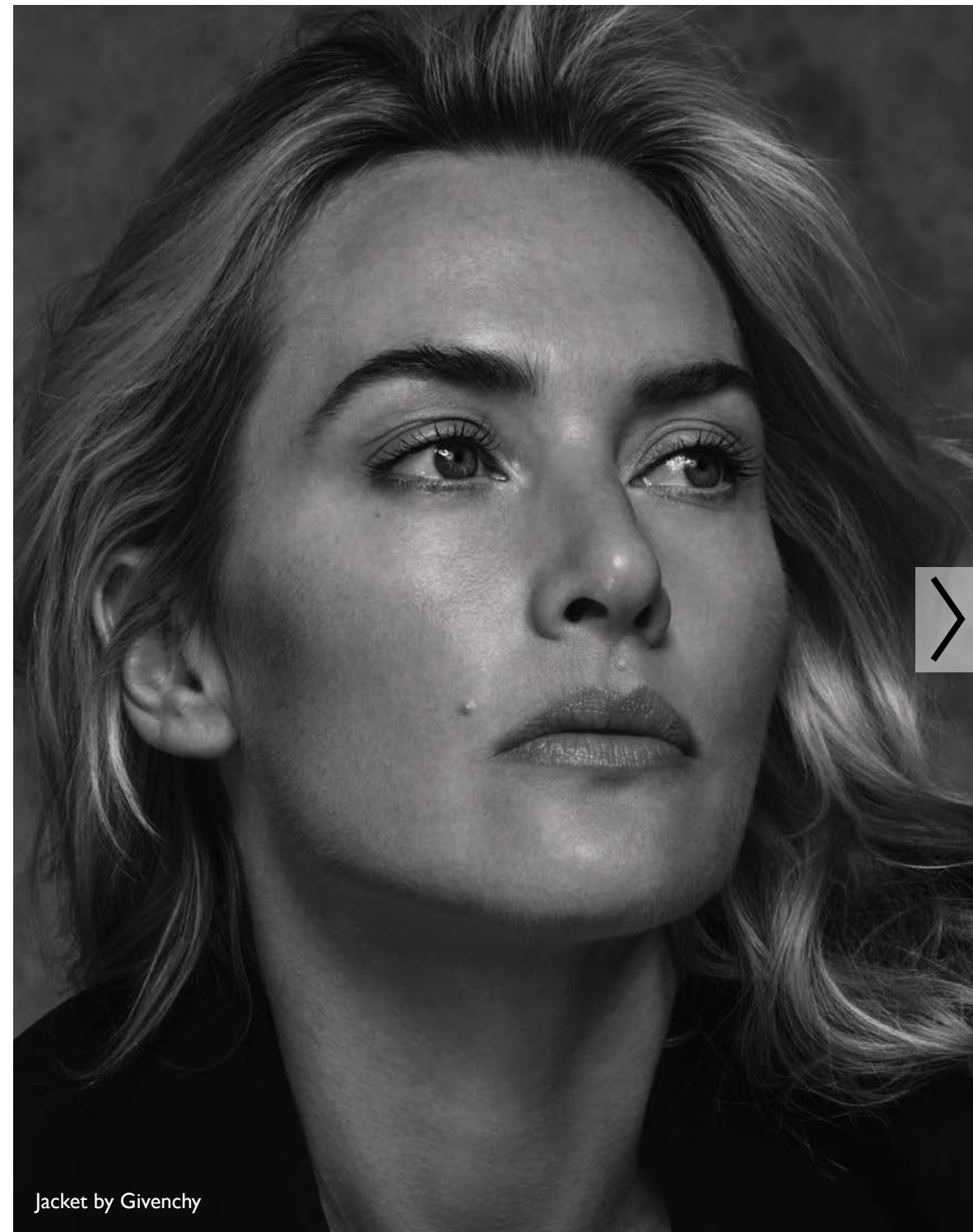


*“I’m BAFPLED that anyone might
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Confidence comes with AGE”*

Dress by Emilio Pucci;
bracelet and ring
Kate’s own



Shirt by Nina Ricci;
skirt by Merchant
Archive; bracelet
Kate's own



Jacket by Givenchy

man, making the fact that Winslet's love interest in *The Dressmaker* is 25-year-old Liam Hemsworth all the more momentous. This is not a cougar story, but simply how the casting panned out. Winslet's take on the casting? "How marvelous!" she says. "I did say to Jocelyn [Moorhouse, the director], 'Are we going to get away with this?' And she said, 'Yeah, yeah, he looks older than he is.' Anyway, I don't feel old. I feel excited about being 40."

Frankly, she should. Scalpel-free, Winslet is proof that women become more beautiful as they age; that experience lends depth to prettiness. "You can get away with a lot more in your twenties," she admits. "You can get away with having one too many vodka tonics, and you can wake up in the morning and not have a puffy face. I couldn't go out now and get rip-roaring drunk; I'd take a week to recover and I value my life too much. Plus, I have children.

"[But] I'm baffled that anyone might *not* think women get more beautiful as they get older," she continues. "Confidence comes with

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age, and looking beautiful comes from the confidence someone has in themselves."

Winslet is an ambassador for Lancôme and, because she wants to be "a person who stands by what they say, personally and publicly", she tells them if she thinks the lighting in her shots is blurring out too many wrinkles, and they fix it.

Personally, it has all come good, too. Winslet married Rocknroll in 2012; their son, Bear, was born a year later. She also has a daughter, Mia, 14, with her first husband Jim Threapleton, and a son, Joe, 11, from her marriage to Sam Mendes. "Everyone's doing great," she says. "And that makes a big difference to a mother's happiness, when everyone is ticking along."

Winslet's own school years were



Shirt by Chloé; skirt by Nina Ricci; earrings by Anita Ko; bracelet and ring Kate's own



Shirt by Nina Ricci;
earrings by Anita Ko

not wholly happy. She has talked in the past about being bullied by classmates who called her “Blubber”; years ago, she appeared on British TV chat show *Parkinson*, triumphantly crowing, “Just look at me now,” at those old adversaries. Although she still keeps her teenage diaries locked away in a storage box, none of it seems to have scarred her too deeply: “I’m quite good at [saying,] get it all out, deal with it, move on.”

No doubt becoming an Oscar-winning star, lauded by the likes of Leonardo DiCaprio as the best of her generation and inspiring awe in Michael Fassbender (“The first day [on set] I was like, Jesus, I’m in trouble. She’s just so...on it,” he says of his *Steve Jobs* co-star), must have helped level the score.

“I tried THERAPY once and thought, ‘Oh God, I could OUTSMART you, GOODBYE.’ I won’t bother with that again”

“The night before my 30th birthday I had an extraordinary dream,” Winslet tells me. “In the dream I walked into my old classroom at school. And in the classroom were all of my classmates and me. I got to have a conversation with myself, and it was so real, so clear. I said to myself then: ‘Just be yourself and make the most of every day.’ I really remember saying it and I’d say the same thing now to that younger version of myself.”

As a result, there is no game plan to help Mia and Joe through adolescence, just an intention to “keep them busy. Lots of creative, fun, sporty things that they’re either good at or bad at, but they enjoy trying, so they don’t become too inward thinking.” She isn’t a fan of naval gazing: “I tried therapy once and thought, ‘Oh God, I could outsmart you, goodbye.’ So I won’t bother with that again.”

Mia wants to be an actress, an ambition that Winslet supports wholeheartedly. “All I say to her is: ‘Amazing, it’s the best job in the world. You’ve just got to keep working at it, never stop learning.’”

Winslet's own experience of growing up in the industry was largely without trauma – “I've always had boundaries; I've never felt exploited” – but she also admits she got “very, very lucky. The first job I did [*Heavenly Creatures*, directed by Peter Jackson] was very prestigious, which helped me professionally but also in terms of how other people perceived my personal integrity. It made a *huge* difference; I walked right into luvvie central and was welcomed with open arms.

“But if you let a child of 14, which Mia is, just go into that world with no support or explanation of what that world is – who these people are, what they do – they're just wandering blindly. So my only real concern is that I would want to make sure she is learning things in the right order and being respectful of people around her.”

Winslet is full of admiration for today's young actresses who are breaking through. Asked what advice she would pass onto them, she says, “They all seem to be doing OK. [Whispers] Some of them are a little bit thin [raises her

“*[Heavenly Creatures]* was very prestigious. It *HELPED* how other people *PERCEIVED* my personal *INTEGRITY*”

voice again], but they all seem to be doing great. Shailene Woodley [her co-star in the *Divergent* films] – whom I adore, respect, have a little bit of a girl crush on – is an outstanding human being. She's incredibly grounded, knows who she is and is doing great work, too.”

As for her own future, Winslet won't say if she has ambitions to write, produce or direct; she simply wants to carry on pushing the boundaries. As far as acting goes, I can't really think of that many opportunities she has left to do so.

“I would like to play a man at some point,” she muses. “I think it would be an interesting challenge.” *Steve Jobs* is out October 9; *The Dressmaker* is out November 20

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