



# She who dares

*Actress, writer, producer, comedy genius, not to mention a worthy opponent to Alec Baldwin, TINA FEY is a very smart woman. She shares her life lessons with ANNABEL BROG. It's a must-read*

*Photographs by SEBASTIAN KIM Styling by TRACY TAYLOR*

Jumpsuit by Halston Heritage; sandals by Jimmy Choo

## DISCOVER YOUR COPING MECHANISM

“For me it was about hitting age 13 and realizing, ‘OK, I’m not going to glide by on looks. I’m a normal-looking person, but that’s not going to be where my bread is buttered.’ The *desire* to be funny – because you are never actually quite sure if you really *are* funny – is a coping mechanism, another way of ingratiating yourself. But when you’re 13 and trying to be funny around boys, you end up mocking them and it backfires. You terrify them.”

## DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE COOL GIRL

“I met Amy Poehler in Chicago in 1993, when we were both studying improvisation. She was the cool girl. I remember counseling *so many* guys who were just immediately in love with her. It was a phase that every Chicago improviser had to go through – ‘I’m secretly in love with Amy.’ ‘Of course you are, I know.’ Amy is very warm, a great person to have on your team in any capacity. We

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*“AMY Poehler was the cool girl. I remember counseling so MANY guys who were just in LOVE with her”*

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work together best – on [their new movie] *Sisters*, or presenting the Golden Globes – by doing our own thing next to each other. I do wonder, if we tried to do five years on a series together, if it would be like, ‘Wait a minute, which one of us is the boss?’ Because, truthfully, I think we are two Alphas.”

## THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE SHARPER THAN YOU. POSSIBLY YOUR OWN CHILD

“My daughters [Alice, 10, and Penelope, four] will tell you that I’m exceedingly dull – the fourth funniest person in the family. My four-year-old is rivaling my husband [composer and producer Jeff Richmond] for first place at this point. The ability to be very cutting that I have – to size



Blouse by Monse; skirt by Elizabeth and James; sandals by Jimmy Choo; ring throughout Tina's own



Dress by  
Rosetta Getty

Jacket by Tom Ford;  
pants by Tibi; bra by  
Eres; sandals by Jimmy  
Choo



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*“My DAUGHTERS will tell you that I’m exceedingly DULL – the FOURTH funniest person in the family”*

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someone up and think, ‘This would hurt you, if I said this’ – she has it already at four. And it’s shocking to me. I secretly regard it as a sign of great intelligence, but it’s something that must be managed.”

#### BEWARE OF THE BRUNETTE IN THE BACKGROUND

“Alec Baldwin is insanely talented and to work with him for seven years [on Emmy Award-winning comedy *30 Rock*] was an education. He’s a great actor, but also he would tell me wonderful ‘Old Hollywood’ things I loved. Like, if we were shooting in a crowd, he would say, ‘Don’t have a good-looking brunette behind you in a shot.’ He’s very male – he rivals *Mad Men*’s Don Draper as one of

the most truly masculine characters in the last 20 years. When you work with someone that long you get a comfort around them, but [with us] there’s this oppositeness that makes it spark.”

#### REALITY TELEVISION IS A REALITY CHECK

“Sometimes I like to watch those *Real Housewives* TV shows, and Alice will be there and I’ll say, ‘See how these ladies have put all this goop in their face, isn’t that funny? That’s silly, right? Why would they do that?’ And that’s hopefully going to be the thing that keeps me from doing it.”

#### MEAN GIRLS ARE SCARY, EVEN WHEN YOU’RE 45

“Marlene is my best girlfriend. She was Prom Queen at high school, based on the fact that she is so incredibly likeable – very pretty, but never the Mean Girl. I was [the Mean Girl], I admit it openly. That was a disease that had to be conquered. It’s another coping mechanism – it’s a *bad* coping mechanism – but when you feel

Jumpsuit by Mugler





Top by Rosie Assoulin;  
pants by DKNY; bag by  
Saint Laurent by Hedi  
Slimane

less than (in high school, everyone feels less than everyone else for different reasons) in your mind it's a way of leveling the playing field. Though of course it's not. Saying something terrible about someone else does not actually level the playing field. If I meet a girl of 14 or 15 today who is that kind of girl, I am secretly, in my body, afraid. Even though I'm 45."

#### PARENT BY EXAMPLE. ACCEPT THAT YOU WILL FAIL

"I try to show Alice and Penelope patience and generosity – patience I fall short on – and that they can be working women and have a family. And *yet* – I joke about this with my husband – we spend so much time in front of them

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*"I was the MEAN Girl [in school], I admit it. If I meet a girl today who is like that, I'm AFRAID. Even THOUGH I'm 45"*

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complaining – 'I wish I didn't have to go back to work'; 'I'm so mad I have to work tonight' – that I feel like inadvertently they're going to be layabouts on government assistance. When Alice was small, I would bring her to the *30 Rock* set because I wanted to show her why being famous is the least important part of anything; it's a by-product. The making of a story, making characters, building sets – these are the really cool parts. Because this society is raising children who want to be famous for nothing, to just have followers."

#### BEING FAMOUS SHOULD BE EARNED, NOT ASSUMED

"I shielded the girls from [fame] for a while, but then I spoke to a school psychologist and she was really helpful. She said, 'I'll tell you the same thing I tell wealthy people, that you can say [to your kids]: Yes, this is something that I have. And it's mine. It's not yours.' Like if it was money you would tell them, 'Yes we have lots of money, but I earned it, and it's mine. And someday you may have yours...'



Demystify it, but don't pretend it's not happening."

#### REMOVE YOUR BODY HAIR ONLY WHEN NECESSARY

"Body hair is a constant annoyance. Mostly I just let it be. Until I have to go into a professional situation and then I have to shave from head to toe."

#### MAKE YOUR INTERIOR DREAMS COME TRUE

"I love my apartment so much. I was always a fan of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and when we got our apartment I thought: 'I wanna call Thom Filicia [the interior designer from the show]', so he decorated our apartment. It's the one time I said, 'I'm going to live my television dream.' But I have to have a cleaner. I never have time and cleaning doesn't bring me the joy it brings some people."

#### IF YOU DON'T GET THE JOKE, THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM

"Steer clear of the internet and you'll live forever. We did an *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*

Dress by Dolce & Gabbana

episode and the internet was in a whirlwind, calling it ‘racist’, but my new goal is not to explain jokes. I feel like we put so much effort into writing and crafting everything, they need to speak for themselves. There’s a real culture of demanding apologies, and I’m opting out of that.”

#### SURROUND YOURSELF WITH FRIENDS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

“One of the joys of making *Sisters* for three months was Amy [Poehler] renting a house in Long Island. She had pool parties and all our kids were together – my kids, Amy’s sons, Rachel Dratch’s kids, Maya Rudolph’s children [the writing and performing team from Fey’s *Saturday Night Live* days]. That was a really lovely benefit; most often the only times we get to see each other is for a work thing. But we try.”

#### YOU DON’T *HAVE* TO KISS A LOT OF FROGS

“I would say I have, for sure, now kissed more men on camera than off. I’d kissed other boys before

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*“I’ve KISSED more men on CAMERA than off. I’d kissed other boys before [my husband], but it’s not a deep BENCH”*

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Jeff, but it’s not a deep bench. Jeff was the piano player in Chicago [in the ’90s] who live-scored our improvisation, which is an incredible talent. He had very short hair and a very Welsh face, and the first thing I said to him was: ‘People ever tell you that you look like Anthony Hopkins?’ My friend Marlene was visiting so we all went out and she said, ‘That Jeff guy likes you.’ And when he drove us home – he had a car, because he was an adult – he just did the dumbest joke: he had a thick head of curly hair and he grabbed it and said, ‘I can’t wait to get home and get this toupee off.’ It was funny!”

*Sisters is out December 18*

**SHOP TINA’S SHOOT ▶**



Dress by Victoria Beckham