

THE ACTRESS STARTS
IN A SHOCKING
NEW ROCK BIOPIC,
CARVING OUT A
NICHE OF RESPECT
AFTER YEARS OF
TEENYBOPPER FARE.

KRISTEN

written by Gregg LaGambina photographed by Yu Tsai

PHOTOGRAPHY: YU TSAI FOR OPTUSREPS.COM PHOTOGRAPHY: TONY D'AMICO FOR OPTUSREPS.COM HAIR: ANDY LECOMPTE FOR SOLOARTISTS.COM MAKEUP: JILLIAN DEMPSEY FOR AVON AT THE WALL GROUP.COM. STYLING: TARA SWENNINGEN AND TREVOR SWEARINGEN FOR THE WALL GROUP.COM

LACE JACKET WITH
CONFETTI BY **MONIQUE**
LHULLIER CROCHETED
TOP BY **RACHAEL**
CASSAR, LEATHER PANTS
BY **VALENTINO** AND
PEEPTOE PLATFORM
HEELS BY **BURBERRY**.

out of focus girl

STEWART



SEQUIN DRESS BY **INA SOLTANI** AND SILVER CUFF BY **ALEXIS BITTAR** AND BOOTS WITH METAL FRONT BY **CHANEL**



LACE JACKET WITH
CONFETTI BY **MONIQUE
LHULLIER** CROCHETED
TOP BY **RACHAEL
CASSAR**, LEATHER PANTS
BY **VALENTINO**. AND
PEEPTOE PLATFORM
HEELS BY **BURBERRY**.

T

HE COURTYARD LOOKS LIKE A WEDDING cake. Take a pickaxe to all this swept marble and you'd hit yellow sponge made from eggs, milk, and margarine. Perfect triangles of evergreen leap from topiary tubs, fountains make chlorinated arcs into shallow pools emptied of even a single tossed penny.

And there in the distance is our misplaced plastic bride, truant from the cake top, a few layers down, slouched against a cream-colored column in a sunlit archway, exhaling Camel smoke. She is looking at the ground and looking everywhere at the same time.

"I knew it was going to be you," she says cryptically, raising her head and stamping out the cigarette.

To be Kristen Stewart takes antennae. Offset from the scant groupings of hotel guests and khaki-panted walkabouts slowly roaming the manicured grounds, Stewart is hiding badly. Even if she were not that girl from *Twilight*, she'd be that girl over there from who-knows-where, in black jeans and a gray t-shirt, smoking and glowering and trying very hard not to look anyone in the eyes. With her invisible province breached by my approaching footsteps, her guard eases only slightly after an introduction.

Seated now near a new tree planted in freshly combed dirt, a nervous waiter takes drink orders and scurries off, all of his body language mutely bellowing "I know who you are!" Stewart is talking about Sean Penn. She knows him. She appeared in his film *Into the Wild* a few years ago and she just bumped into him out in front of the building. She had said, "What's up?" He half-smirked and said, "Haiti." They tried to linger, to smoke and talk, but in a matter of minutes, shutters were clicking, some paparazzi had gathered, and the conversation was abruptly over.

Now, freshly agitated, Stewart's entire aspect is animated by nuisance. She winces with pain, clutching at her neck. "I must've slept on it wrong. Every time I look over my shoulder, it kills." (Regardless, she'll persist to peer behind her every so often with an audible start, turning back around with a grimace.) Everything has conspired and aligned here perfectly this afternoon for Stewart to generously, and without pause, talk shit about whatever topic merits her ire. Fame is always a good place to begin.

"If I could go to work every day and not have to be followed around by fucking fifteen gangsters trying to take my picture, willing to do anything for one... It's not normal," she says. "It's funny how in America fame is placed so fucking high—above wealth, above happiness, above everything. It's so not true. And I knew that before [I was famous]. It was so obvious to me. I don't know how people can't see that from an outsider's perspective. My perspective is the same: it's exactly what I thought it would be."

The waiter returns with iced tea and soda, apologizing for interrupting, but wanting to let us know that the kitchen will be closing soon and if we want anything cooked, now's the time to say so. Stewart politely declines, moving ice cubes around in her glass with a clear plastic straw. The waiter disappears like mist.

The thing is, she's not ranting. She's not dour, mean-spirited, or even complaining. All of this is like describing the clouds, or the leaves on the trees. They are things that exist in the world and she is talking about them. She'll soon be 20 years old. One film almost three years ago made her the most famous



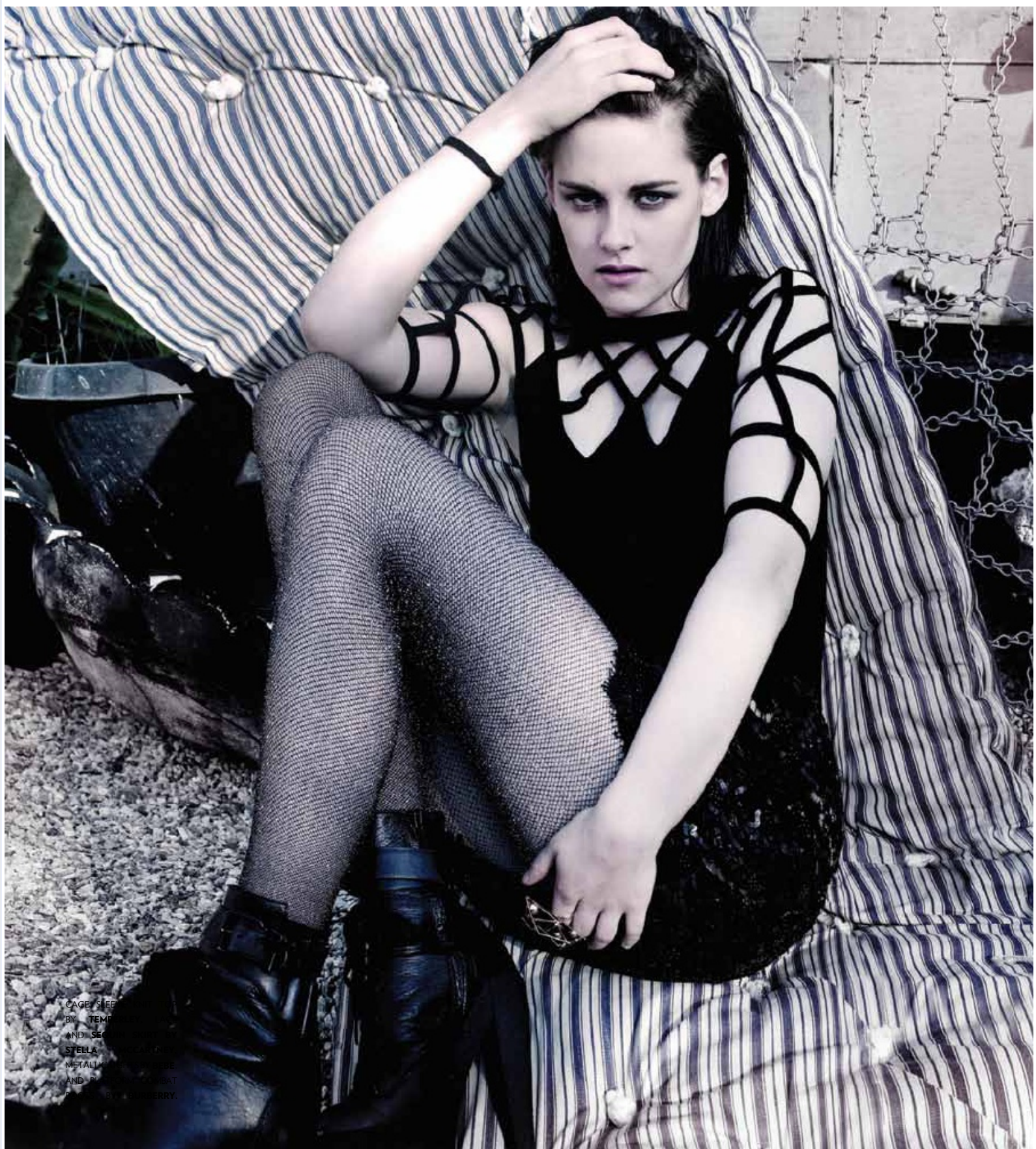
RACER BACK TANK
AND LEATHER SKIRT
BY **THOMAS WYLDE**
FEATHER CAPE BY
BEBE. KNEE HIGHS BY
AMERICAN APPAREL
BOOTS WITH METAL
FRONT BY **CHANEL**. AND
CUFF BY **ALEXIS BITTAR**







PLEATED SLEEVELESS
BOLERO BY **BEBE**, CHAIN
DRESS BY **AMANDA
WAKELEY**, METALLIC
TIGHTS BY **BEBE**, PEEP
TOE PLATFORM HEEL BY
BURBERRY, AND ARM
CUFF BY **ALEXIS BITTAR**



CAGE SLEEP
BY TEMP
AND SE
STELLA
METALLIC
AND P
BY HERRY.



teenaged actress in America and people twice her age write blurbs saying she should smile more. Or wear different shoes. Or get a new haircut. And she's right. It's all very fucking stupid.

"It's very aggressive, too," she says. "If fame is the optimum, ultimate position you could ever imagine yourself in, then you would just be the luckiest person in the world. So, anything could happen to them and you shouldn't care. Why would you care or feel bad about a famous person? They're famous! I really appreciate everything in my life, but that's not why I started acting."

In the gulf between *Twilights* Two and Three, Stewart is attempting to loosen the vice grip of franchise-driven notoriety by playing serious roles in smaller films. It's an oft-played strategy of the recently fan-swarmed, but it's no more or less calculated than the mania surrounding her as Bella Swan. It can't be planned. It's all dumb luck. If anything, it's the largesse of the vampire fiends who've unwittingly allowed these other films to get made and maybe even seen.

In music-video director Floria Sigismondi's feature debut *The Runaways*, Stewart takes on the creation myth of one Joan Jett in her earliest days as a pre-packaged punk rocker before she left and launched her celebrated career fronting the Blackhearts. Any stylist with a thimbleful of talent could've made Stewart *look* like Jett, but to fill in the fabled space of an already-made icon is something else. It takes acting and Stewart does her best in a middling film comprised heavily of the clichéd rise-and-fall melodrama seen before in countless other movies about the same thing. It's all about mood and lighting and wardrobe and the slow-motion snorting of drugs. In short, it looks and feels like it was made by a music-video director.

Plus, it's Dakota Fanning's movie, really. All tarted up and lip-glossed as Cherie Currie, she makes any gent in the room old enough to use a razor squirm in their seats damply like Humbert Humbert (if they happen to recall she's still a full year shy of her sweet sixteenth). But Stewart is good in it. Only a few minutes in and you're thinking of Jett not Robert Pattison and his lovingly brandished fangs. And that's no small feat considering the gluttonous market reach of those *Twilight* films that have befuddled even this waiter—who's back now, by the way—hovering with a silver tray of freshly baked cookies.

"On the house!" he announces, and just as quick, flutters away like a bow-tied dragonfly.

But it's Stewart's other new film that might actually do the trick. In director Jake Scott's *Welcome to the Rileys*, she plays Mallory, a street-nymph lap-dancer adrift in New Orleans until the well-intentioned James Gandolfini shows up and forces her to get her fucking shit straight like only James Gandolfini can. It played along with *Runaways* at this year's Sundance and it was *Rileys* that surprised, inspiring even the beloved Roger Ebert to wax, "Who knew she had these notes? I'm discovering an important new actress."

"That was awesome," Stewart says of Sundance, glaring at the newly arrived plate of baked goods like it's a shoe that fell from the sky. "It was the most satisfying experience to be able to sit in front of 300 people who had just seen the movie. Even more so with *Rileys* because that girl is so broken. I couldn't get her out of me for a while. It was scary. To be able to talk about that with people who have just seen it, that was the most insane experience.

"I was so scared of going to Sundance," she continues. "I thought everyone would write shit reviews. I thought everyone was waiting, itching to say that I should just go back to *Twilight*. And no one said that. I put so much into it. I would have died working on that movie. So if they did say those bad things, then I might as well just stop now. I got really lucky because those two movies happened to be so different [from *Twilight*]. I choose my work instinctually. I couldn't have a plan. I would always fall short. What I do is so impulsive. Who knows what you're going to connect with and then be

able to live up to? I can't just read a script and say it's great because there's a part for me, my age, perfect—I can't live that life. You know what I mean? That's just not me."

Suddenly, an overweight older woman appears tableside, gesturing at the cookies. "Ooh! Do we get some of these too?"

"No," the waiter says, matter-of-factly, seeming to appear from the same magical finger snap that borne them both.

"What makes these people so special?" the older lady smiles and winks conspiratorially at Stewart, who is holding her neck again, with a slight grimace, exploring the pinched nerve (or whatever it is) that's been plaguing her usually keen ability to scan for these kinds of interlopers. We push the plate nearer to the woman and her eyes widen. Gratiified, she waddles off, the sound of crisp oatmeal giving way to eager teeth.

This, apparently, has created an opening, as a mustachioed black man in a yellow polo tucked into smartly pressed trousers is clasping his hands nervously and awaiting his turn to talk. "I'm sorry. I just wanted to say that I'm just a really big fan. Is this your agent? I don't mean to interrupt. I'm just a big fan. Hello."

"Thanks," says Stewart, manufacturing a convincing benevolence, slightly smiling even.

The man stands there a moment or two longer, a small infinity that makes everything slow down to an awkward standoff. He finally backs away, bowing almost, and returns to his own table. [Later, the waiter will whisper to me, "Sorry about that. We've been having problems with him lately." Meaning what, I'll never know, and leaving all sorts of odd scenarios in the mind's eye to fill in the blank left by the word "problems."]

"He was nice, at least."

"He was nice," she concedes. "He didn't ask for a picture. That's good, because then they go and Twitter them and then the paparazzi know where I am and they drive to my location and it gets crazy. Twitter fucks me over every day of my life. Because people go, 'I'm sitting next to Kristen Stewart right now' and then they show up. I see people on their phones and I just want to take these cookies and throw them. It's like 'Get off your fucking phone and get a life!' I get so mad. It's like you're trampling on someone's life without any regard. And it's rampant. Everyone can do it now. Buy a camera and you're paparazzi; get a Twitter account and you're an informant. It's so annoying."

So, we're back to the beginning, talking about this again. Perhaps it's unavoidable sitting out here in the sun in Beverly Hills where half the people are famous and the other half are asking them for handshakes (or interviews). Or a fucking cookie for Christ's sake. Might as well embrace it.

"Have you ever punched anyone in the face?"

"No!" she says, laughing slightly. "I've hit people, but I've never clocked someone."

"People think you smoke a lot of pot."

"People say that all the time. People are like, 'She's on crack. She's a dopehead.'"

"How do you muster the strength to even leave the house?"

"You just go into the mode of 'Don't give a fuck.' Otherwise..." And that word just hangs there. Otherwise what? Someone gets punched? Cookies get thrown? The more obvious question becomes: Then why sit here and listen to questions and pose for photographs to go along with your answers? How can you possibly justify complaining after participating?

"Right," she pauses. "I don't have an answer for that. I guess people just want you to be so over the moon for the position you're in that you have no principals, you have no sense of the world around you, and you're living in a celebrity fantasyland. Is that what they want?"



LACE AND CHIFFON
SEQUIN BOLERO BY
CHRISTIAN LACROIX
CUTOUT HIGH-WAIST
PANTS BY **GUCCI**. MESH
TALL BOOT BY **CHRISTIAN**
LOUBOUTIN. AND RING
BY **ALEXIS BITTAR**





SEQUIN DRESS BY **INA SOLTANI**. SILVER CUFF BY **ALEXIS BITTAR**. AND BOOTS WITH METAL FRONT BY **CHANEL**.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY **YU TSAI**. STYLIST: **TARA SWENNEN**. HAIR: **ANDY LECOMPTE**. MAKEUP: **JILLIAN DEMPSEY**.

BEAUTY NOTES: MOONSHADOWS EYESHADOW IN HONEY AND WINE, MORTAL GLOW BLUSHING CRÈME IN ADRENALINE, FEMME FATALE LIP GLOSS IN HUSH, AND JUST BITTEN STAINING BALM IN LULLABY BY **LUNA TWILIGHT**; MASCARA IN BLACK, KOHL EYELINER IN BLACK, AND BE BLUSHED CHEEK COLOR IN BLUSHING NUDE BY **JILLIAN DEMPSEY FOR AVON PROFESSIONAL**; HELLO FLAWLESS PRESSED POWDER IN CHAMPAGNE, ERASE PASTE CONCEALER IN #1, AND STAY DON'T STRAY PRIMER BY **BENEFIT**.



I shrug. I might even nod.

“Well, I don’t want to be that and they can continue to talk shit. But that’s just scary.”

No, what’s scary is that a grown man (at least twice her age) got up from his table to tell Kristen Stewart that he’s a big fan. A fan of *what*, exactly? Assuming he’s referring to the films she’s appeared in—and it’s probably safe to bet he’s only seen the pair of *Twilight* installments—what does he want in exchange for his hello? A story, probably. Something to tell someone else that adds a discernable ounce of worth and weight to his own life, tipping the scales ever-so-slightly in his favor. Or something like that. But if I were him and he could hear what I was thinking right now, I’d tell me to fuck right off. (Or something like that.)

But the fact is, this young woman sitting at this table (the one where a cookie has gone missing) *is* engaging and charismatic and smart and pretty. The precision of her disdain and general enthusiasm for shit-kicking is infectious. She makes you want to root for her. Sure those high school vampire flicks can be mocked easily and often, but you’re a liar (or lack an essential levity in your life) if you weren’t entertained at least by their overwhelming eagerness to entertain.

But most of all, every time she looks over her shoulder and winces, you wince too. The vigor with which she’s clutching on to any semblance of authenticity is something you’d like to help her to keep too. Yeah, sure, she’s mostly *that girl from Twilight*, an idea she rightfully loathes, but an actual thing for which she seems grateful. If *Welcome to the Rileys* is evidence of anything, she’ll be more than that in time. That is, if a world full of fluttery waiters, cookie thieves, and dumbstruck fanboys trapped in adult bodies don’t beat down her will. Ah, fuck it. I’m a fan now too. Sorry. Throw me on the burning pile with the rest of them.

“Yeah, I definitely act differently. I’m definitely overcoming a lot of it. The only insecurity I’ve developed is just being overly paranoid about everyone looking at you when they’re not,” she admits, grabbing at the pain in her neck again, arresting herself from the unending urge to look around. “I used to love getting out and tripping around, but now I have to look at the ground. Otherwise, you’re inviting interaction every thirty seconds which is impossible to manage. But that’s not everywhere. I can still go places. It’s not sad, it just *sort of* is.

“I really love what I do. It’s just a different life,” she concludes, pressing fingers deeper into the tendons above her shoulder blade. “I get defensive and that has probably perpetuated people’s idea of me never smiling. I kind of shake my leg too, so people think I’m always uncomfortable. I understand why people say I’m such a negative Nancy. I can’t pretend. I’ve always been involved, very personal. I like to write too. Acting and living and writing: it’s all one and the same. It’s just consideration for other people and yourself.”

“Part of your wanting to act, to write, comes from your interest in other people?”

“Yeah, me being one of them!”

Kristen Stewart smiles. She finally drops her hand from her neck, looks up, and smiles. There’s no one around. The restaurant’s closed. There’s no one here to tweet or text. Anyone with a real camera is likely chasing Sean Penn down some nearby hallway. But god-damnit if the woman didn’t just smile and no one was here to see it. We both look around and silently decide the conversation might as well end here.

“Well, I won’t put you through any more pain.”

“Yeah, that was *awful*,” she says, standing up to leave.

A smile *and* a joke? There’s no one else left here to ask. Where *is* that fucking waiter when you need him?