

RANKIN
PHOTOGRAPHY

EMMA WATSON

ELLE MAGAZINE



it's a new life

Forget that famous film series, there's much more to Emma Watson than the role that defined her for more than a decade – as we're about to discover

Photographs by RANKIN

Fashion by SASA THOMANN

Shearling gilet by Isabel Marant.
Wool jumper by Missoni.
Plastic boots by Pollini for Louise Gray. Silver and metal necklace by Eddie Borgo at Liberty. Silver and enamel rings by Bolange Azagury-Partridge

Words by AVRIL MAIR



Satin and faux-fur jacket by
Trumpchi Chisato. Sequined silk-tulle
top by Christopher Kane at Harvey
Nichols. Cotton-mix shorts by Dior.
Felt cap by Miu Miu

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Who'd have thought that meeting Emma Watson would be such an underwhelming experience? Well, you wouldn't. Why ever would you? There are certain expectations when you fall into the orbit of a Hollywood star – not just any old star, in this case, but the most famous of her generation, lead actress in the biggest film franchise of all time, currently one of the industry's highest earners – and, well, you're waiting for some of them to be met. She should be self-absorbed with the narcissism of youth, at the very least, carrying an undersized dog and an inflated ego, or else, conversely, be making an unconvincing attempt to seem simple and almost exactly the same as us civilians, despite an estimated £24-million fortune. But... no. Not Emma Watson. Instead, she appears as herself. That is, a delightfully ordinary 21 year old who has ended up in the most extraordinary of circumstances. 'I question it all the time. Like, this is craziness! I can't believe my own life. How on earth did I manage this? How am I here? It is very, very strange.'

As she sits with her knees neatly pressed together, dressed in a perfectly serviceable outfit of black leggings and ballet pumps, Emma Watson looks for all the world like an eager student waiting for a lecture. She's pretty in a clean, fresh-faced sort of way – with her gamine hair and scrubbed skin, she looks heart-wrenchingly young. She doesn't have the presence you'd expect. It goes without saying she doesn't have the attitude, either. But then, Emma isn't a star in the way we've come to define that term: sure, she can create magic in front of the camera – eight *Harry Potter* films over the past 10 years have proved as much – but that in itself isn't what we expect from celebrities today. 'My problem is I'm a bit boring really,' she says, with the hint of a smile. 'That's why the tabloids always feel the need to make up more interesting stuff. The way I choose to look when I'm not doing something public is very specific. I don't carry around designer bags, I don't wear big sunglasses. I'm not comfortable being the centre of attention. When I'm not working, when I'm not being *Emma Watson*, I'm just trying to not stand out.'

It's an unexpected thing for an actress to say, especially one so successful at playing a character inextricably linked with her own. After all, Emma and her alter ego, Hermione Granger, have grown up in public together. But when *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* – the final instalment in the record-breaking series – was released worldwide in July, Emma had long since stepped away from the spotlight. A straight-A student, she finished school at the same time as Hogwarts and distanced herself from the trappings of Hollywood, heading to the US Ivy League university Brown in the autumn of 2009 instead, forcing Warner Bros to timetable the final two films around her study schedule. 'Brown was a way to find some space for myself,' she explains. 'I'd been working solidly since I was 10 years old. I felt I needed a bit of time to just try and be Emma.'

Of course, *Harry Potter* got in the way, with its relentless round of reshoots and promotion, meaning that Emma had to temporarily halt her studies at the start of this year. 'I was basically commuting across the Atlantic. Taking

a semester out wasn't what I wanted to do, but I am still enrolled at Brown. Despite what the tabloids wrote, I was never bullied there. And I was genuinely never asked for a single autograph, either. I feel lucky to have been able to have that time, because it would have been easy for people not to leave me alone.'

It's early on a sticky summer morning in Paris, the temperature already forcing its way towards 30°C, and Emma woke up in a suite at the Ritz. 'The final emotional round of *Harry Potter* press has come and gone. 'It was intense and mentally draining,' she recalls. 'The premieres felt like an out-of-body experience where I was watching what was happening, not sure it was really me. I shut down to an extent and that's a good thing – it was such an emotional barrage.' And now she's taken up a new role. Following in the footsteps of Penélope Cruz, Julia Roberts and Kate Winslet, Emma is an ambassador for Lancôme and the face of a fragrance, Trésor Midnight Rose. 'Someone asked me why I would accept this when I said I wanted to study and stay out of the limelight. But could anything make me any more famous than I already am?' she asks, rhetorically. 'I've given up on the idea of anonymity. I used to try and pretend I wasn't famous by insisting on taking the Tube or the bus. I was kind of rebelling against it. But I realised it isn't possible to be oblivious to it all – I've come to accept what's happened to me. I travelled to Bangladesh last year and was standing there in the middle of these mud houses when a child came up and said, "You're the girl from *Harry Potter*!" I knew at that point there was nowhere in the world I could go where I wouldn't be recognised.' She still finds it impossible to describe the other-worldly insanity of her breed of mega-fame. 'I feel like I step into a dream and that's where I keep my sanity. The minute I start believing it all, that's when I'll lose it.'

It isn't Emma's first foray into a more glamorous world – she has been the face of Burberry Prorsum, been dressed by Karl Lagerfeld and partnered on eco-friendly lines with designer Alberta Ferretti and Fair Trade clothing company People Tree – but it is a proper ▶

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This page: hand-painted cotton-
mix jacquard top by Myrza de Muynok.
Faux-fur skirt by Simone Rocha.
Gold and diamond necklace by
Annouahka. Net leggings by Stella
McCartney. Opposite: embroidered
feather jacket by Missoni
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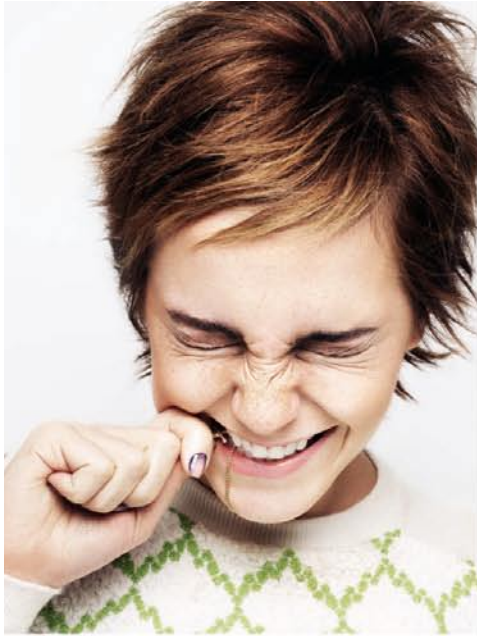


This page: wool and leather playsuit, and patent-leather shoes, both by Louis Vuitton. Leather bunny ears by Lyall Hakarata
Opposite: wool top, leather and lace skirt, and leather belt, all by Rodarte at Browns. Satin boots by Miu Miu

'I don't want to look like EVERYONE else. I don't have perfect teeth; I'm not stick thin. I want to be the person who feels GREAT in her body and can say that she doesn't want to CHANGE anything'

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'I'm going to go TRAVELLING – a sort of gap year, condensed into a few months. Don't think I'm going off to FIND myself, though. I already KNOW who I am'

they call in a crisis. I like being there for people.' Her two best friends are from school – one is studying to be a lawyer, the other a doctor. She says they are the first to tell her if she ever starts to behave like a diva. 'I'm lucky they aren't in the same industry, just hearing about their days gives me perspective.' She's recently been spotted kissing the actor Johnny Simmons, but refuses to be drawn on the subject of relationships, explaining carefully: 'It's quite complicated, but I think that's because of my situation. Hopefully it's not me!'

Emma is an interesting person in the good old-fashioned way – that is, she clearly has an inner life as opposed to a celebrity existence that's merely writ large on the newsstands. If it weren't for the fact that she has such a famous face, she would slide unnoticed through the world. And that would make her very happy indeed. 'I've never known anything other than this,' she reflects. 'It has always been my reality. It's just that I was incredibly protected in what I call "the bubble" during *Harry Potter* and I didn't realise how much. It's different now. I think for someone like Rob Pattinson [who started his career in *Harry Potter* and *The Goblet of Fire* before

finding superstardom in *Twilight*] it's harder because he'd lived his life one way, then all of a sudden he wasn't able to. I've never known what it's like to have that kind of freedom. I can't even imagine what that kind of fame must be like. So many people must wish they were in his position and think that he has the best life, but actually... there are prices you pay. Don't interpret that from my perspective; it's not so bad for me. I'm not in Rob's position, I don't have people screaming and crying and clawing at me. I'm so grateful for that.'

If there is any celebrity whose life she admires, it would be Natalie Portman. 'She's incredible,' Emma enthuses. 'She's dealt gracefully with being famous from a young age and has made really interesting choices. But I'm realising I am in a very different position to her. *Harry Potter* is an entity unto itself. I mean, her debut was in *Leon* so she's been playing controversial roles all her life, while something like *Black Swan* would be a stark contrast for me. Although I wouldn't let fear of what people might think dictate the films I make in the future, I do feel a certain sense of responsibility – I've been incredibly fortunate and I don't want to let anyone down, I suppose.'

Despite this trepidation, Emma made two films in 2011: the first, *My Week With Marilyn*, is an indie biopic starring Michelle Williams, in which she plays a supporting role as a wardrobe assistant to Marilyn Monroe. In the second, *The Pinks of Being a Wallflower*, scripted from a gritty novel by Stephen Chbosky that was originally published by MTV, she's almost unrecognisable as a party girl. The film deals with issues such as suicide and teenage depression, and the subject matter clearly resonates with her. 'Free handbags are

lovely, but that's not what I see as the benefits of being famous. It means I can do things I really care about, like this film, which might not have been made otherwise. Being a teenager is quite lonely, particularly for my generation. There's a sense of people being cut off and in isolation. And when I read the script, it just made me feel less alone. My character says this line: "You accept the love you think you deserve", and that just hit me like a steam train.' Shot on a low budget in just two days, it was a whole new experience for other reasons, too. 'It was a little

bizarre, but any film now is going to be,' she reasons. 'What do you mean, you don't want me to stay for another three movies?'

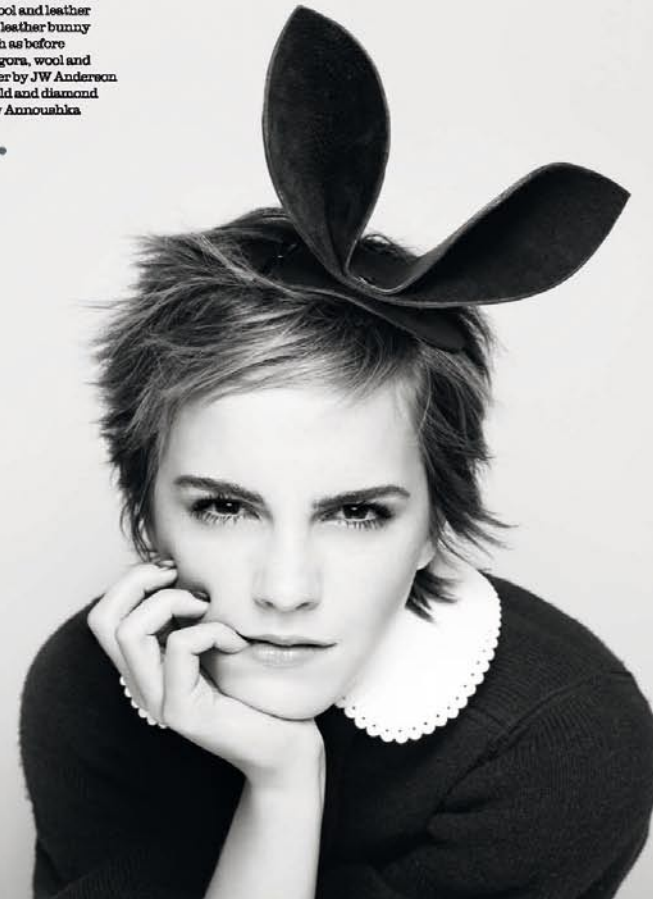
If in the past Emma has sounded uncertain that acting will be her future, now she seems to have accepted it. Although, as you'd expect, she is just too unstarry to celebrate the fact unconditionally: 'Obviously I have insecurities and doubts. But I just have to do my best and be myself. And then hope that's enough.' In the meantime, before committing fully to film, she's taking a bit more time off. 'I'm going to go travelling – a sort of gap year, condensed into a few months. I've seen the inside of many lovely hotels all across the world, but I've never been to Venice or Rome or Madrid.' She runs unpainted fingers through her hair and focuses those luminous eyes, serious once again. 'Don't think I'm going off to find myself, though. I already know who I am.' Gracious and grounded: who would think there's anything underwhelming about that? ■

||| | Watch Emma answer your style questions at ELLER.TV

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'Obviously I have insecurities and DOUBTS. But I just have to do my BEST and be myself. And then hope that's enough'

This page: wool and leather playsuit and leather bunny ears, both as before
Opposite: angora, wool and cotton-mix jumper by JW Anderson at Browns. Gold and diamond necklace by Announhka



HAIR: ERINO SILVANI AT RED FOOT MAKEUP; ART: FRANKIE; HAIR AND MAKEUP FOR: LURKEDRINK.COM; MAKEUP: LINDA DE JESU; STYLING: JORDA POTTRETT; FUR: SHEPPOD; JEWELRY: BEE AUSTRALIAN ROCK

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