

Sunshine Superstar

*Twin meets Imogen Poots, the
headstrong British beauty making
her biggest splash on-screen.*

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Dress by *Prada*, gem stone and white
ceramic floral bracelet by *Prada*,
sunglasses Imogen's own.



Dress by Rodarte.

While new young starlets are forever being compared to more established actresses, it is hard, when meeting Imogen Poots, not to think of Kate Winslet. Both are down-to-earth, articulate English performers who, while never afraid of stating their own opinion, also possess a hearty sense of humour. Although Winslet spent much of her early career on period films such as *Sense And Sensibility* and *Titanic*, Poots is about to cast aside her bonnets with her latest project, *Filth*. Adapted from the Irvine Welsh novel about a bi-polar, drug-addicted policeman, and co-starring James McAvoy and Jamie Bell, it's a major leading role that is sure to kick her into the mainstream.

Now 22 years old, Poots got the acting bug in her teens. At 14, she joined a local Saturday theatre group in Chiswick that was big on improvisation. "There were kids from all different backgrounds and of various ages, and everybody got the chance to stand up and do something," she remembers. "It was a great environment to discover what acting meant to me: that sense of giving and receiving is a wonderful experience to have, as well as a feeling of being accepted. The key thing to me now is that sense of play that you get from improvisation, in terms of the unpredictable, precarious nature of the person opposite, it really keeps you on your toes."

Her parents were encouraging, her mother taking her on frequent theatre trips with her younger brother Alex, and she could always talk shop with her father, a TV producer specialising in current affairs who currently works on the *Al Jazeera* channel. Her first bit parts on *Casualty* and later as a lesbian teen in the film *V For Vendetta*, took



Dress by Band of Outsiders, socks stylist's own, gem stone and white ceramic floral bracelet by Prada.

her away from school part-time, but it wasn't until she was given one of the lead roles in the 2007 horror film *28 Weeks Later* that she decided to defer her place at *The Courtauld Institute Of Art* to study history of art, and act full-time. In the sequel to Danny Boyle's hit film *28 Days Later*, Poots played Robert Carlyle's daughter and revelled in the experience, despite the grizzly scenes of zombie massacres. "There were bodies and stumps everywhere," she says of filming the horror in London's Hyde Park. "I thought it about fondly the other day while I was going around the lake in a pedalo."

Next up, Poots appeared as Fanny Knight in the BBC production of *Miss Austen Regrets*, alongside Eva Green in *Cracks* and as a necromancer in the film *Centurion* with Michael Fassbender and David Morrissey. She joined Fassbender again in Cary Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre*, playing Blanche Ingram to Fassbender's Mr Rochester. Then there have been the slightly more controversial roles such as the teenage temptress who gets to seduce the ultimate love rat (played by Michael Douglas), in *Solitary Man*, and the daughter of Trevor Eve in the hit TV series *Bouquet Of Barbed Wire*, in which the father-daughter relationship turns from loving to obsessive. And last year, Poots won the role of Jean Ross in the TV drama, *Christopher And His Kind*. Matt Smith plays Christopher Isherwood as he discovers the sexual underworld of Berlin in the early Thirties. Ross is the musical-wannabe who is never going to make it. "She was such a broken and fragile character," admits Poots. "It was a joy to find a character of such conflict who has nothing



Dress by Sacai.



Dress by Junya Watanabe.

“Period dramas don’t interest me right now, I read all the classics at school and I’m bored to death with them.”



Dress and sandals by
Christopher Kane.



Dress by *Rochas.*

to conceal – everything is written all over her face.” Poots hugely enjoyed working with Smith: “It was amazing to see him morph into this role, to transform himself.” They have stayed friends ever since.

Poots singles out her happiest acting experience to date as working last year on the film *A Late Quartet*, which is currently in post-production. Appearing alongside Catherine Keener, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Christopher Walken, Poots had to learn the violin in under two months for the film about four members of a world-renowned string quartet. “I gave up sleep to learn the violin and was playing it all the time,” she says. “I was living in New York during filming and every night when it had finished, I would be shaking. But I loved it. Catherine is an amazing, wonderful and inspirational lady. She’s got pzazz. She’s motherly, super-fun, very interested and interesting. And Christopher Walken too, he is such a funny guy, he always had me in stitches with his quick wit.”

A few days after we meet, Poots is heading up to Glasgow to start filming *Filth* in which she plays a young police officer, which she says is a, “fabulous role for a woman in an ensemble piece dominated by men.” She seems delighted to escape another corset drama. “You always want to break free from any given image,” she sighs. “And I’d love to avoid being handed a couple more bonnets, although I’m not saying that I want to exchange them for syringes! It’s just that period dramas don’t interest me right now, I read the classics at school and I’m bored to death with them.”

With her slender frame, high cheekbones and wide, almost Julia-Roberts smile, it is no surprise that Poots has already been noticed by the fashion industry. Last year she was chosen as one of the faces of *Chloé* fragrances and this spring, she was the star of the video directed by Sofia Coppola for the *Marni* for *H&M* line. Coppola says that she chose Poots because she reminded her of Marisa Berenson. “She can convey so much without even speaking or doing much. It was really fun working with her.”

And fun Poots most definitely is. She’s great company and a curious mix too: opinionated, and strong-willed, she’s also, rather endearingly, prone to blushing. Friends with successful actors such as Aaron Johnson, Sam Taylor-Wood’s fiancée and star of the Lennon biopic, *Nowhere Boy*, she is not at all starry or name dropping, and seems to prefer the anonymity of New York or London to her rented flat in L.A. Fairly quirky in her fashion tastes (her wardrobe favourite is a pair of love-worn red boots) Poots is refreshingly ‘British’ in her no-nonsense attitude. “I’m very sure of what I don’t want to be,” she says. “It’s a matter of knowing yourself and your identity and nobody can take that away from you.” ☀



Dress by *Marc Jacobs*, lace bra
stylist’s own, briefs by *Eres*.

HAIR *Michael Long* at Frank Reps.
MAKE UP *Dawn Broussard* at Frank Reps.
STYLING ASSISTANTS *Rae Boxer* and *Olivia Horner*.

