

Amanda SEYFRIED

The *Mamma Mia!* star isn't just sweetness and light. *Red Riding Hood* proves there's sauce to go with those saucer-eyes...

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Two gorgeous blondes stroll casually into an LA photo studio. One walks upright, bundled up in a thick black coat and scarf, the other trots on all fours, trailing a long black lead.

Amanda Seyfried, star of a giddy karaoke phenomenon and tipped for a megaton career, is today accompanied by her canine companion, an Australian Shepherd named Finn. Here to shoot *Red Riding Hood's* poster campaign – and, of course, to talk to *Total Film* – Seyfried (pronounced Sigh-frid) stays wrapped up warm as she curls up on a sofa with Finn nestled beside her. But the 25-year-old actress has been shedding layers on screen in the last couple of years, moving away from the butter-wouldn't-melt sweetheart roles of *Mamma Mia!*, >>



RED RIDING HOOD

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SUMMER PREVIEW



Sweetness and fright: (left) Seyfried in *Mamma Mia!*; (right) with Gary Oldman in *Red Riding Hood*.

'THERE'S A LOT OF PASSION IN RED RIDING HOOD. WE'RE NOT SHY'

Dear John and *Letters To Juliet* into sultrier, saucier territory inhabited by lesbian call girls and fairy tale maidens discovering the joys of sex for the very first time.

As directed by Catherine Hardwicke, *Red Riding Hood* is naturally being called a hotter, sexier version of *Twilight*, in which the save-it-til-marriage premise gives way to making the beast with two backs in dark, dank forests. Hardwicke tells *Total Film* it's "steamy" and admits the studio have asked her to tone it down ("But I'm not planning to if I don't have to"). Delving into the creepier, more sensual corners of a fairytale that's existed in different incarnations for 700 years, her take features grandmother (played by Julie Christie), the big, bad wolf (now a werewolf) and a Little Red Riding Hood who's snared in a love ménage à trois between woodsman Peter (Shiloh Fernandez) and wealthy fiancé Henry (Max Irons).

Slurping green sludge through a straw (she's on a raw-food diet), Seyfried describes her Little Red Riding Hood as "young, virginal and very assertive. She feels she can have pretty much what she wants and she's fearless, which is a beautiful thing." As for what kind of girl Seyfried is, the Pennsylvania-born actress owns up to being nothing like the lovely, delicate flower who crooned so winsomely in *Mamma Mia!* A child model who studied opera and piano for several years, she was all set to enrol in Fordham university when she landed her breakout role as the spectacularly dim member of girl clique The Plastics in the Lindsay Lohan vehicle *Mean Girls*. That led to a university deferment and roles in US indies like *Alpha Dog* and *American Gun*, and a pair of telly series, *Veronica Mars* and HBO's *Big Love*. Then *Mamma Mia!* exploded.

After that \$600m-grossing multiplex gorilla, Seyfried could have become America's sweetheart on a global scale... if she'd wanted. Instead she opted for odder, quirkier roles like Needy in *Jennifer's Body* and the troubled call girl Julianne Moore hires to seduce her husband only to fall into the sack with her in *Chloe*. She nods vigorously at our suggestion that the sultry, free-spirited side we've been seeing lately is closer to the real Seyfried than the innocent waif she's so pleasantly essayed.

"When I'm playing a role like [*Red Riding Hood*]'s Valerie, I can kind of let it hang out... Because I'm very open about myself... her voice drops to a whisper - "...burping and, you know, things that my boyfriend's mother wouldn't appreciate. That's just a saying because I don't have a boyfriend right now [Seyfried and her *Mamma Mia!* co-star Dominic Cooper split after three years in May 2010], but it's nice to play that young carefree girl and sort of be dirty, you know?"

Seyfried used to feel challenged, even compromised, revealing the bawdy, salacious side of herself on screen. She

recalls with horror a time when she was watching *Big Love* with her family, her grandmother watching on as her character had sex on the screen. Now she's more relaxed about it. "I can turn my sexuality on and off," she declares matter-of-factly. "It doesn't exist in everyday situations, I don't really think about it then, but there are certain situations where I will make myself be aware of it. Just to keep myself in check, you know? Not to say that I'm overtly sexual - I'm not. But I'm definitely very connected to that side of myself."

And that means not batting an eyelid when a film calls for nude sex scenes, as did *Chloe* and *Red Riding Hood* - although, with the latter's contractually-obliged PG-13 rating for the States, audiences shouldn't expect to find themselves too hot and bothered. "I did the same thing for *Dear John* - I didn't have my top on but nothing's shown. That's never an issue for me anyways." So with its sexier, fleshier *Twilight* vibe, how lusty do things get in *Riding*? "We don't waste any time getting down," she says. "I'm pretty aggressive and when Peter comes back into town, I know I love him and I know he loves me and I want him near me..." She's lowered her voice again. "I want to be with him and I fight him and he kind of relaxes and... lays me down. She doesn't necessarily lose her virginity but there's a lot of physical passion. We're not shy. When you want something, it's nice to not watch two characters pussyfoot around it."

Seyfried did pussyfoot around *Red Riding Hood* at first. Not because she was worried that steaming up the screen would offend the *Mamma Mia!* fan-army but because she didn't want to face the inevitable *Twilight* associations. "The *Twilight* thing scared me," she admits. "I don't want to be part of a phenomenon because it doesn't hold in the long run. But, fuck man, Catherine's like a kid - she bounces off the walls and she's full of ideas that could inspire anybody. It's hard not to get sucked in. But, honestly, I'm already so sick of the comparisons."

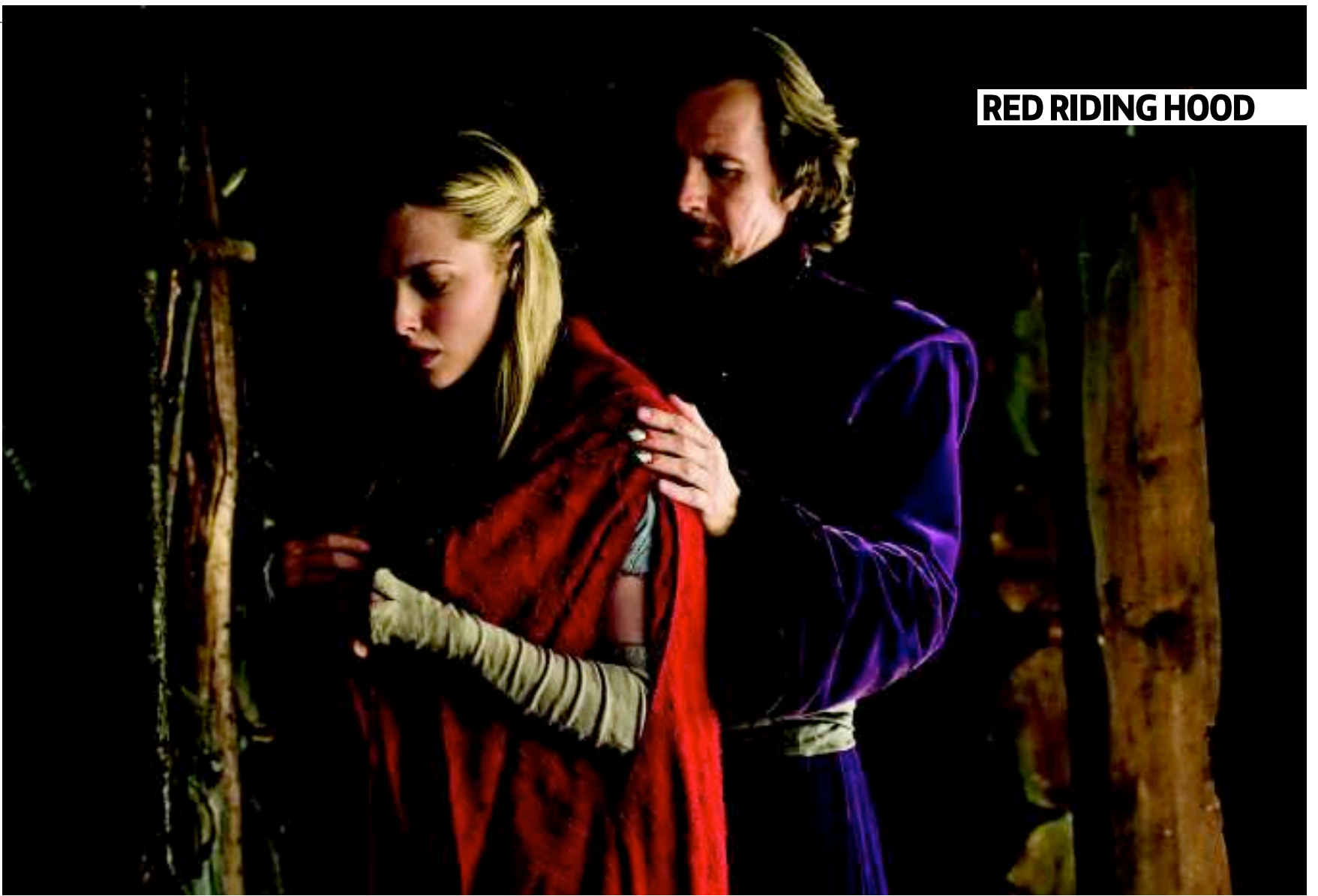
And as far as she's concerned, werewolves are way cooler than their pasty supernatural counterparts: "I'm sick of vampires. So many of them are too feminine looking anyway. But a werewolf... it's got fur!" she says, clutching Finn's scruff. The actress also relished the prospect of tapping into Hardwicke's uncanny connection with the teen audience. "I feel like there's no judgment with them. I remember going to the movies with my friends and seeing *The Fast And The Furious*. I just went and

Note-worthy:(below) Seyfried in *Letters To Juliet*; singing with Dominic Cooper in *Mamma Mia!*



ROBERTO DESTE/CORBIS

RED RIDING HOOD



I enjoyed it for what it was. That's the beauty of being younger. I'm older now..." She pauses, wistful. "I won't be able to play these kind of girls for much longer."

The way her career looks to be panning out, though, she's in good shape as long as she keeps making intriguing choices. Currently shooting Andrew Niccol's (*Gattaca*) sci-fi thriller *Now*, set in a world where ageing stops at 25 (but so does life unless you can afford to pay), she sports a red-bob wig over those signature blonde tresses. And that's not all... "Hell, yeah! I have guns in this movie! My favourite part was when Justin [*Timberlake, co-star*] kept bursting into song on set. He'd just be mocking something but it'd sound beautiful. God, I love it when he opens his mouth that way."

Of course, she's something of a proficient belter herself. But when it comes to tuning her voicebox for the mooted *Mamma Mia!* sequel, Seyfried insists it's not going to happen. "Oh god... no, look, lay that to rest. It is *just* not happening. And if it does, I honestly don't think that they could make something good. I don't see the point of trying to top it because *Mamma Mia!* was so sweet and positive and people love it - to try to do it again would just be a big mistake." She's equally dismissive of rumours that she'll be toplining a live-action retread of another fairytale heroine, Cinderella, for Disney. "Never even heard of it," she states. "I honestly don't know anything about it."

After *Mamma Mia!*, playing a pert, perfect Disney princess isn't likely to float Seyfried's boat. For one thing, she's already had to tone down expressing her liberal views and the more outré aspects of her personality in public lest they offend *Mamma Mia!*'s fanbase. Being a role model for young girls is

cool, she insists, but, as she's already expressed to *Total Film*, she's an irredeemable belcher, and swears like a trooper. "I do!" she admits. "But I keep that in check." True: she's only unleashed a paltry pair of "fuck"s during our interview, even after she's been assured she's in safe hands. As someone who calls herself a Brit at heart, she knows we share a laid-back approach to casual swearing. "I know! Look, I have the tattoo to prove it!" she says, pulling up her pencil jeans to reveal a 'Team Minge' tattoo on top of her foot (done in cahoots with her *Mamma Mia!* co-stars). 'Minge', it transpires, is her favourite British slang term, though she also owns up to having a healthy appreciation for the 'C-word'. "You can't say that [*in America*], but I do use it - when I'm in good hands. I like it because people are so terrified of it. It's weird that words have that much power but I don't feel like I'm doing females wrong by saying it."

As for Team Minge, they're still a going concern. "Rachel [*McDowall*] was just here. Whenever they come to town they stay with me and whenever I go there... Well, I usually don't stay with them because they live in south London." Seyfried lobs in a mischievous cackle. "I was staying in Primrose Hill whenever I was there 'cos that's where Dominic [*Cooper*] lives. But I haven't been back since..." Since their split? "No, before that. It's tough, I need to get back. But it's hard when your relationship starts there and then goes on for three years. It'll be difficult to go back but I love it. Oh god, it just feels so easy to be there. You don't have to watch yourself all the time..."

Red Riding Hood opens on 15 April and will be reviewed in a future issue. For more features and video go to totalfilm.com



Home girl: Seyfried with Justin Timberlake and co in *Alpha Dog*.