

**L**he eyes have it. Kate Bosworth's fetchingly mismatched peepers – one blue, one hazel – are among the first things you notice as she rushes forward to greet you, blonde and willowy in bias-cut aqua, a smile on her heart-shaped face.

It's also rare for a high-profile actress to be this friendly and open from the get-go. "Hi, I'm Kate," the 34-year-old says, extending a fine-boned hand. "Thank you so much for coming."

Connecticut-raised, LA-based, with a ranch in rural Montana, Bosworth, is in London to promote *SS-GB*, a five-part BBC TV drama based on Len's Deighton's alternate history novel, which imagines a post-war Britain in the grip of Nazi rule. Bosworth stars as Barbara Barga, a *New York Times* reporter increasingly embroiled in a homicide under investigation by chiselled British detective Douglas Archer (Sam Riley), a man who dallies with the Resistance and mumbles a lot.

There are trench coats, cigarette holders and hat boxes with false bottoms; treacherous dealings, rumours of Winston Churchill's execution and a sense of great events unfolding just out of reach. Bosworth shines as an 1940s femme fatale, part Grace Kelly, part gung-ho journo: "The Nazis have taken over most of England and Barbara's been sent to cover the story," says Bosworth, perched on a couch in this London hotel suite. "She's a bit ambiguous, so we are left wondering what her motivation is."

*SS-GB* dovetails with current world events, she says. "It is about what might easily have happened had the Allies not won, if things had gone the other way. So I think right now, at such a complex moment in time, we have history to look back on, and history is cyclical." A smile. "We must be optimistic because there are extraordinary people out there. I personally believe that good will prevail."

Bosworth is referring, I think, to the new US administration. But since I've been told via email that "Kate would prefer to avoid political questions or anything too personal", I don't push.

Not that I need to: chatting to Bosworth feels rather like hanging out with a close girlfriend, albeit a bestie who has acted in flicks from the mega-budget *Superman Returns* to the Grammy-winning indie *Still Alice*,

and been romantically involved with Hollywood hunks Orlando Bloom and Alexander Skarsgård. Oh, and who is also a darling of the fashion world, with campaigns for Tory Burch, Calvin Klein and Topshop under her minuscule belt.

"Journalists often want sound bites," she offers, "and we're in a world that is now so complex, so thought-provoking, that I have to say I can't give them one. As I often tell Jasper" – Bosworth's 18-year-old stepdaughter, whose father is writer and director Michael Polish –

people, especially if they're shy or insecure, to reach out to those who've walked the coals, so to speak."

The only child of Harold, a retail executive, and Patricia, a housewife, Bosworth was just 14 and a junior showjumping champion when she was cast in *The Horse Whisperer* alongside a tweenage Scarlett Johansson.

Acting was never an aim. While her parents had fostered a love of theatre by regularly taking her to see plays on Broadway, all the young Kate wanted

"I had some terrible falls when I was young, on fences, gallon drums," she says with a wry grin. "But I was just totally fearless! What's nice about having this combination of discipline and wild energy as a kid is that it's a quality that remains with you. My husband always says he's found his cowgirl."

Aged 18, she channelled that fearlessness into *Blue Crush*, a cult surfing film for which she trained hard and did her own stunts. Then came the iconic role of Lois Lane in the 2006 blockbuster *Superman Returns*, a sequel filmed over eight months in Sydney – the city that sparked Bosworth's love affair with Australia.

"You know, there are some characters you play that are dear to your heart, and I feel that way about Sydney. It was such a transformative time in my life.

"I really came into my own there and met people that became like family; I met my best friend when she worked with me on that project [Jacqui Louez, at whose wedding Bosworth was bridesmaid in Sydney in 2009]. We're both the only children in our families, so we say we're each other's soul sisters."

No matter that her performance as Lane received mixed reviews, with some critics complaining that the 22-year-old Bosworth was way too young to portray Superman's famously wisecracking love interest. Today, she agrees with them.

"I was just a kid. I don't know how interesting I was at 22, or how interesting any 22-year-old is!"

She grimaces and corrects herself. "I mean, I'm 34, I'm still young, but the more time you have on this planet the more confident you become, the more experience you've had to fill you out." Another smile. "After I met my husband, who's a filmmaker, there isn't a moment in the day when we're not creating or talking about creating and it's such an enriching experience."

Michael Polish, 46, who makes films with his twin brother Mark (they're known as the Polish Brothers), is a strong invisible presence in our interview.

The couple met in 2011, when Polish directed Bosworth in the Jack Kerouac-inspired adventure drama *Big Sur*. Polish's taste for rough-edged Americana matched Bosworth's background in the great outdoors; shortly after shooting commenced – and Bosworth had got her nude scene out of

# time to shine

**She's blonde, beautiful and charming. But success hasn't always come easily to Kate Bosworth. Now starring in a blockbusting BBC thriller, she tells Jane Cornwell she is finally getting the roles she wants.**

"we need to have more dialogue before we can digest what is happening. Young people always think they should have everything sussed; it took me experience to be able to articulate things properly."

She pauses for a beat or two. "You know, I always regret not having a career mentor. I did have someone who helped me find the tools to navigate a very strange industry and create healthy habits in my life" – Bosworth has previously spoken of undergoing therapy in her 20s – "but no one that advised me artistically. So I always encourage young

to do was ride: "Connecticut is a place where people are serious about horses. I was obsessed; I remember asking my parents if I could sleep in the stables."

She says she only auditioned for *The Horse Whisperer* because there was an open casting call for riders, which she figured meant getting off school and galloping around every day. She still rides when she can, especially when out in untamed Montana, on a property visited by grizzly bears, next to a lake teeming with pike – albeit with a lot more caution.

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the way – both felt some strong vibes going on between them: “I started to sense I had known this girl a long time,” Polish said. “I said, ‘I’m going to marry this girl.’”

Eager not to become another clichéd movie fling, the couple decided to wait until after filming had wrapped to see how they felt. When they met two months later, Bosworth instantly knew she’d found The One.

“It hit me at about a million miles an hour,” she has said. “I almost fell off my chair. They always say when you know, you know, and I had found that quite frustrating my whole life. How do you know? But it’s true.”

The pair married in Philipsburg, Montana, in August 2013, in a four-day Mexican-themed celebration that involved a wagon-style bridal carriage, preceded by fly-fishing, horse-riding and camping out.

While resolutely strong, independent and a firm supporter of women – she’s a fan of young feminists such as Emma Watson, thrilled at the success of friends including Jessica Biel and recently, in the bathroom at a party, told the activist, mentor and technology executive Sheryl Sandberg how much she admires her work – Bosworth nonetheless says she feels better and more grounded when her husband is around.

“Our relationship isn’t hard but life is,” she shrugs. “It feels very deep to know that no matter what gets thrown at you, this person is not going anywhere. And I know I sound a bit like a Hallmark card, but art is such a huge part of my heart and I almost feel like I discover him over and over again because we’re always looking at things together.”

As Bosworth’s Instagram account testifies, the couple are each other’s muses; under the aegis of their joint

### **THREE FACTS KATE BOSWORTH**

Bosworth’s mismatched eyes are the result of heterochromia iridium, a condition she was born with. “It’s a defect, you know. I actually notice it more when the light is very grey.”

She is a voracious reader whose favourite authors include Jonathan Franzen and Haruki Murakami. Each Christmas, her father sends her a clutch of books he thinks his daughter should either read, produce or act in: “I was introduced to *Still Alice* that way. I tweeted [author] Lisa Genova to say how much I admired it, she tweeted back to say I should enquire about the film, then suddenly I was in it!”

Bosworth’s husband Michael Polish has her signature tattooed on the inside of his left arm: “When he crosses it over his chest, it protects his heart.”

production company, Make Pictures, they have a Bonnie and Clyde-style film, *We Shot Ourselves*, in post-production (“I got behind the camera and Michael got in front of it, which he really doesn’t like”), two TV shows in pre-production, and a film adaptation of *New York Times* best seller *The Year of Fog* in the works.

“It’s such a brilliant project,” says Bosworth of the psychological thriller. “We had our eye on the book and someone else did too, so we’ve had to play a very patient waiting game.”

Her roles, she agrees, are getting tougher, more three-dimensional.

“I just love moving into my 30s. Just the other day I was speaking to a friend who was turning 30 and having a meltdown, and I said: stop resisting, because any fears are, quite honestly, made up. The moment you understand that and make that switch, you get connected to yourself.” Her different-coloured eyes flash. “Then things really do only get better.” •

*SS-GB* premieres on Foxtel’s BBC First on Sunday May 7 at 8.30pm

