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Title: Anna Kendrick Interview

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Celebrity is just beginning to dawn on this *Twilight* alum as she reprises her role as Jessica Stanley in both *New Moon* and *Eclipse*. But Anna Kendrick's star is going to rise above just the tween-lit crowd when audiences catch up with her starring role opposite George Clooney in *Juno* director Jason Reitman's latest Oscar-calibrated fare, *Up in the Air*.

Anna Kendrick was born on August 9, 1985, in Portland, Maine. Her first stab at acting was a fruitful disappointment. In answer to a casting call for the Broadway adaptation of *Annie*, Kendrick and her family nabbed a New York agent to secure an audition. The *Annie* role didn't work out, but the agent landed Kendrick the role of Dinah in the Broadway musical *High Society*. Kendrick garnered a Tony nomination for the role (she was the second youngest ever to do so). The stage actress made her film debut in *Camp*, a role that nabbed her the Best Debut nod from the Independent Spirit Awards. The Spirit Awards later honored her with a Best Supporting Actress nomination for her turn as the live-wire debater in *Rocket Science*. It was this performance that caught the attention of *Juno* director Jason Reitman, who began to cater a role in his latest movie specifically for the young starlet. So in between her work basking in the *Twilight* series, Kendrick was going toe-to-toe with George Clooney in *Up in the Air*, playing a newbie corporate downsizer who develops an efficient way to layoff people online.

AskMen.com : In *Up in the Air*, you play the new girl at the office who's in way over her head. When you came on the set, did you feel like the new girl who's in way over her head amidst veterans like George Clooney and Vera Farmiga?

Anna Kendrick : I think I absolutely connected to the idea that Natalie is trying to sit at the grown-up table and constantly trying to prove that she's good enough to kind of outperform expectations about her age and gender. That was an easy thing to relate to on this film. I've worked with phenomenally talented people, but predominantly young actors. I felt like I was trying to sit at the grown-up table and [was] trying to keep up. That pressure was definitely there.

AM : Was it a learning experience?

AK : The scene that I have with George and Vera [Farmiga], where we're talking about the expectations that we have for our lives -- it was so amazing to get to watch them work. I felt like I was watching Cirque du Soleil.

AM : Apparently Reitman wrote this character thinking of you.

AK : I wish he told me that because I thought he absolutely despised me.

AM : Why did you think that?

AK : He told me that he was trying to stay very reserved and very professional. He thought giving away that he had me in mind would be putting too much pressure on me. It would be like: "Hey, I wrote this for you, so don't screw it up". So he was trying to just stay very professional, but it came across as a little cold. So I thought, I've done nothing to impress him; he hates me. So when I got offered the job, I

was thinking this makes no sense. I'm not this famous person where the studio would want me. The director clearly hates me. Then I had lunch with him, and he told me all of this. That definitely made me a lot more comfortable. We still debate about whether he should or shouldn't have maintained the professionalism or let me know that he was rooting for me. I don't think he should have told me that he wrote it for me, but maybe not making me feel like I was unwelcome would have been nice.

AM : Did the character remind you of your character from *Rocket Science*?

AK : It did in that those are both two roles that are so rare. [The characters] are so smart and so strong and they just happen to be young women. I get really excited every time there's a female character who is really strong because a lot of females in film are really soft. When he told me that he wrote it after seeing *Rocket Science*, I tried to maintain my best very cool, calm, collected, "oh of course you did" face. But inside I was throwing a party.

AM : Would you say that it's rare to find a female character in her 20s who isn't looking for love?

AK : I'm the first one to say that. This role is unbelievable because it could be any gender and almost any age. Obviously, it's affected by the fact that she's a young woman but it has nothing to do with romance or sex. She's just this smart, well-rounded character with so many dimensions and so many of her own problems. And she just happens to be female. It's so rare. I'm so grateful to Jason for having written a role like that for a young woman.

AM : Did you develop a crush on George Clooney on set?

AK : We have more of a father-daughter relationship in the film. And I think George is really smart and he cares about the movie. So we almost cultivated that relationship in real life too. George, at one point, set an age limit on boys I was allowed to date. We got along really and he's unbelievably sweet. So it wouldn't even occur to me to have a crush on him.

AM : What was the age limit?

AK : It was something really random. But, you know what, age [doesn't] matter to me and he's not actually my dad, so he can't tell me what to do.

AM : What's it like being in the *Twilight* series?

AK : It's a phenomenon that cannot be accounted for. It's really exciting. The thing about my involvement is that I get to have my cake and eat it too. I get to be a part of the [*Twilight*] franchise and go on the ride when I feel like it. And I still have my real life. I can walk around and people don't speculate about my private life.

AM : Have you gotten more attention from the *Twilight*-ers since you got cast?

AK : Yeah. The other great thing is that people just seem to be fine with me. Some people love Rob [Pattinson] and Kristen [Stewart] and some people say a lot of cruel things. And people tend to leave me alone. If they want to say something they tend to say something nice. It's an insane franchise to be a part of, but I got it the easiest out of everyone.

AM : Since the first part of *Twilight* has the atmosphere changed in terms of fans and paparazzi?

AK : Thank God that people exist who know how to take care of that stuff. Otherwise, we'd just be mobbed everyday. They've set up a veritable fortress around every location that I've shot at with good reason. We live in our little blacked-out bubble.

AM : How do you compare the attention that circles *Twilight* star Robert Pattinson and George Clooney?

AK : From what I've seen they get different sides of it. Rob gets a lot of screaming and a lot of prying and a lot of really, really intense praise, which doesn't necessarily feel good when it's coming from this hysterical place. Then I see people come to George and because he's so established, some people try [to] trick him into saying something. And it's interesting to watch him sidestep that stuff so gracefully and never lose his cool. I don't know how he does that.

AM : Is there more hysteria around Clooney or Pattinson?

AK : Rob Pattinson. I've never seen anything like it. Yesterday, people were asking me [at the *Up in the Air* premiere with Clooney], "Could you believe how crazy this premiere is?" and I was like, you ain't seen nothing.

AM : Like stampedes and stuff?

AK : Comic Con was pretty intense. We were in smaller theaters, and there were no barriers. I was just thinking, they're feet away, and he's standing right next to me. This kid is going to lose an eye right next to me. There were four security guards around him but all it takes is one and your eye is gone.

AM : Do you understand why people are so into him?

AK : He's attractive, charming and funny, but do I get why people do that? No.

AM : Do you think it's more because they see him as his character, Edward?

AK : Yes. Absolutely. I understand that. Reading the books, Edward [Cullen] is like nothing you've ever read, and I understand why girls go crazy. But I don't understand why there's no disconnect when they see a real human being and start convulsing.

AM : Are you addicted to mass media devices like Blackberry, Twitter, MySpace, and Facebook?

AK : I just got on Twitter because there was some MTV film blog that quoted me on something really innocuous that I supposedly said on Twitter before I was even on Twitter. So then I had to get on Twitter to say: "This is me. I'm on Twitter. If there's somebody else saying that they're me on Twitter, they're not." Because of the *Twilight*, thing I had 10,000 followers in 24 hours, which was terrifying. So now I'm terrified of everything I say on Twitter. I try [to] keep it really benign and work-related. I have to think: "Is this something I wish to say to 50,000 people?"

AM : How did you convince people that you are the real you on Twitter?

AK : Oh -- easy. I'm a genius. I just took a picture of myself holding a sign that's my URL. That's thriller logic, that's what that is.