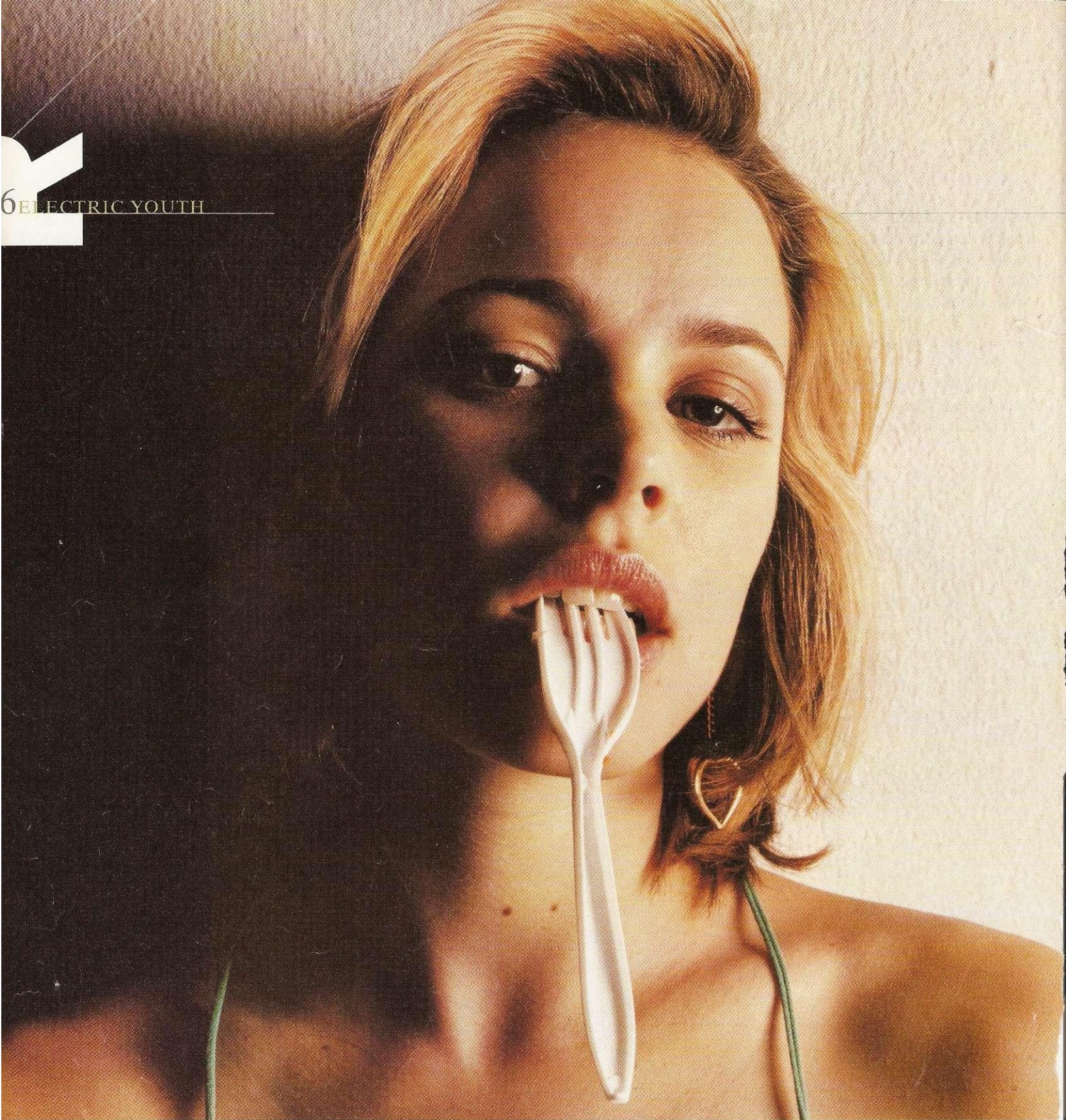


6 ELECTRIC YOUTH



“I got spanked for the toothbrush

E GOLDEN APPLES

Rising star Rachel McAdams thinks the spoils of stardom are downright rotten. By Alexandra Phanor. Photographed by Alex Hoerner

EVERYBODY'S EAGER to please Rachel McAdams. But, frankly, the royal treatment that's customary for budding starlets gives this Toronto-born actress the creeps. As she says, "The more that's given to you, the less you have to come up with yourself. And that's not productive." As if on cue, there's a knock at the door. It's the hotel staff, dropping in for the second time that day to see if McAdams has everything she needs. "She just asked me if I wanted fresh apples," she says, embarrassed by all the attention. "And I haven't even eaten the ones that are sitting here."

Ironically, directors love to make McAdams the center of attention. In *The Hot Chick*—one of her first big roles, and perhaps her most regrettable—McAdams was the scorching femme in question. And in the soon-to-be-released *Mean Girls*, scripted by *Saturday Night Live*'s Tina Fey, McAdams plays a devilish debutante determined to make a new student's life a living hell.

Given her genetic blessings (blond hair, blue eyes, long-limbed frame), McAdams certainly looks the part of the manipulative high school ice queen. But, like the rest of us, she's been trying hard her whole life to stay out of the way of the mean girls. "There are some really angry girls out there who are petrifying. It's a bit of a cliché for an actor to say, but I was a nerd," she confesses. Regardless, the girl who describes putting soap on her brother's toothbrush as the cruelest thing she's ever done got a real kick out of playing nasty in *Mean Girls*. Especially because, in movies, you don't have to pay the price for bad behavior.

"Yeah," she says. "I got spanked for the toothbrush incident."

Growing up in St. Thomas, a small town outside Toronto, McAdams never pictured herself playing for laughs on the big screen. "I didn't imagine I'd be doing comedies," she says. "I just knew I'd be doing dramas. I was doing Shakespeare when I was 12." After a couple of indie films and TV roles in Canada, her big break came at 22, when she landed *The Hot Chick* and was surprised to discover there was a funny girl lurking inside her.

"I'm not worried about being pigeonholed. For me these characters are a stretch," she says. The actress gets a chance to show off her serious side this summer in Nick Cassavetes' *The Notebook*. Filmed in and around Charleston, South Carolina, it's the story of a woman suffering from Alzheimer's who's trying desperately to remember her first love. The bittersweet tale casts McAdams and Ryan Gosling as a young couple embroiled in a forbidden romance.

But her hiatus from the lighthearted won't last long. For the next four months McAdams will be living in Los Angeles, shooting *Wedding Crashers* with funny-men Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson. "I am going to be looking for an apartment today," she says. "I'm usually so transient in L.A., it will feel good to establish a life here and enjoy the sunshine." But isn't she worried that all that Hollywood sunshine will turn her into the pampered star she doesn't want to be? "I don't want to get all dramatic about it, I mean it is nice," McAdams says. She exhales and adds, "Really, these fresh apples are looking pretty good right now."

stylist: jill roth. hair: taylor lucas. makeup: jennifer pitt.

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