

"Practice" Makes Perfect: An Interview with Kate Walsh

Written by Interview by Vanja Veric

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Kate Walsh, known best as Dr. Addison Montgomery of "Grey's Anatomy" and "Private Practice," is taking her name and brand to a whole new level. The debut of her second signature fragrance, *Billionaire Boyfriend*, this past spring and an upcoming role in this fall's most anticipated film, "The Perks of Being a Wallflower," Walsh is quickly turning into a modern-day renaissance woman. With her time on "Private Practice" coming to an end next year, the Tucson-raised actress chats with us about her mega-successful beauty ventures, upcoming projects and long-term career goals.



AFM: What was it like growing up in Arizona?

KW: I remember making some of the best friends of my life, still to this day, there. I just loved growing up there. Monsoon season is one of my favorite things as well. It's just such a great place to grow up. I really love the desert, as cliché as it sounds. I do love the desert landscape and the night sky and the kind of peace that there is there.

AFM: The upcoming season of "Private Practice" will be your last. How did you come to the decision that this would be the end of your time as Addison Montgomery?

KW: It's been such an amazing ride between "Grey's Anatomy" and "Private Practice." It's been such a big piece of my life but it's been nine [combined] seasons and there are lots of other things that I also want to do. The writers are so incredible on the show; it's like this endless cornucopia of great storylines for my character, but in the end it's just a matter of time. When you're on an hour-long show that you work on nine months out of the year, it's difficult to do other creative things. As an actor and an artist, I think it's natural to want to play different parts. So as awesome and amazing as it's been, I feel like it's time to move on to my other projects.

AFM: What can fans expect when season 6 of "Private Practice" debuts this month?

KW: It's going to be really incredible. They're doing this really great thing with the writing where they're kind of shaking up the structure of the shows and making each show stand on its own. [Each episode] is very active either for the entire ensemble with events revolving around them or following one character for an episode and focusing on a crazy storyline. There is so much going on; everybody's world is rocked in the first episode back. Last season was a rollercoaster but this one, the first episode back particularly, is just such a huge episode for everyone. You'll see major stories and major life changes for every character in that season premiere.

AFM: You also have a role in the upcoming film adaptation of the popular book, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. How did you initially become involved with the project?

KW: I had heard about [the book] but hadn't read it. However, I knew it was sort of a modern classic. Stephen Chbosky, who wrote the book as well as the screenplay and directed the film, is just incredible and, the cast is amazing. It's such a special story, and I think it's going to be huge. I think it really resonates with everyone. When I went in to meet with Stephen, I had read the screenplay, and I just really loved the relationship between Charlie and his mom. It was a really awesome dynamic and so sweet. It was just a real pleasure to be a part of.

AFM: How was it working with Logan Lerman and the rest of the cast?

KW: Logan is such a pro. He's so sweet and has this vulnerability and naiveté that he brought to the character of Charlie and is so good and so rare. Everyone was so great. Ezra [Miller] is great, and Emma [Watson] is just so beautiful, so solid.

AFM: You recently debuted your second signature fragrance. What inspired you to start your own fragrance line?

KW: It's just one of those things where I had an idea and just wanted to go for it. It's kind of one of the byproducts of being on a show for a while where you can get a little bored creatively and really want to branch out and do something new. Initially I didn't want to do it because there are so many celebrity fragrances out there, but I kept obsessing over this idea. Once I called my lawyer and he told me the name 'Boyfriend' was available to use, I took that as a green light and started my own business.

AFM: What are your plans for the Boyfriend line?

KW: My idea all along was for it to hopefully grow into a lifestyle brand and have different 'Boyfriends.' The idea is for each 'Boyfriend' to have a different story and relationship. The second one that came out this spring is *Billionaire Boyfriend*, and it's this awesome year-round fragrance with this oriental floral scent that just feels so decadent. It's this fantasy of love and letting him spoil you, almost like an homage to 1960's Monte Carlo. We're focusing on the distribution of this scent and working on the next 'Boyfriend' that will debut in 2013.

AFM: You're also very active in social media. How does blogging and tweeting help you connect to your fans all over the world?

KW: At first when I started tweeting, and all of that, I sort of thought 'eh, I don't think so' and now I just love it. I really love that connection with my fans. We live in a time where social media is so prevalent, and it can get almost oppressive at times with everyone saying what they're doing all the time. But I love being able to answer my fans directly and see what they're up to and how they're feeling and what they think about the show or my business. More than even that, [social media] is this powerful change to the world; it's really changed everything.

AFM: As a successful entertainer, what advice can you give to those trying to break into the industry?

KW: It's always been about hard work and, for me, there was nothing else I loved to do more. I tried. I went to U of A, and I tried to major in business and then I switched to English and then I switched to general studies and then just ended up quitting knowing that I just wanted to be an actor. For me, it was just that it was what I really wanted to do so I say just persevere if it's what you really love.

AFM: What are some projects and long-term goals you have with your career?

KW: I'm really looking forward to producing and doing some writing. I'm excited to go and play other roles, do some more comedy and see what comes, see what's next. I don't know, and I'm very excited about it.

QUICK FIRE:

Favorite way to relax and unwind: Bathtub and red wine.

Best hidden talent: Drumming.

Favorite location to travel: Mexico—the Mayan Riviera.

Best personal fangirl moment: Meeting U2 after following them to an airport after their concert in Tucson.

Celebrity crush growing up: Gregory Peck and Carey Grant.

Dream superpower: To fly.

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Something no one knows about you: I used to play clarinet and just how much I enjoy laying around in bed.

Biggest vice: Self-doubt.

What would you tell your teenage self? The world is much bigger than Catalina High School. It just gets better and better and better.