



Photograph by **Nino Muñoz**

Candid Cameron

She's one of the most successful film stars of her age, but Cameron Diaz is still keenly aware just how different things might have been – and remains refreshingly open. Cheating, children, friendship, ageing, riches, fame... She tells it like it is to *Elaine Lipworth*

Cameron Diaz is 41, an age that strikes fear into the heart of many an actress. Not this one. "It is the best time of my life. I love being this age, are you kidding?" she exclaims, sitting bolt upright on a jade velvet sofa in an airy Los Angeles hotel suite.

Not that Diaz looks her age, of course. She is dressed in Rag & Bone jeans, a plain white T-shirt and oversized Isabel Marant cream cardigan; her tanned face is make-up free, her nails are scarlet and her blonde hair is scraped back in a tight bun. Lean and athletic, from rigorous hours logged at the gym, she is dazzlingly pretty, with sparkling blue eyes. No wonder she isn't concerned about the passage of time.

But Diaz, who recently co-wrote *The Body Book*, a self-help manual that encourages women to be more accepting about their appearance, goes further. "I can't wait to be older," she says with an ear-to-ear dimpled smile. It's an unusual thing to hear from an A-lister in Hollywood, where the cult of youth still rules supreme, though Diaz sees it differently. "This is something we really need to reframe," she says. "The most interesting parts are for women who are over 40. We don't see it that way, because they're not the sexy parts. Look at the Oscar nominees in the last decade." Diaz reels off a list that includes Meryl Streep, Helen Mirren and Dame Judi Dench. "We're not giving those women enough

credit for what they're accomplishing, which is beautiful performances."

Solidarity among women is one of the themes of the new comedy *The Other Woman*, in which Diaz plays Carly, a lawyer who discovers that her charismatic boyfriend Mark (the *Game of Thrones* star Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) is married. She bonds with his wife, Kate (Leslie Mann), and together they discover a third woman in his life (the supermodel Kate Upton in her first substantial acting role). The trio set about taking revenge, spiking his drink with laxatives and replacing his shampoo with hair-removal cream.

Set in New York, the Hamptons and the Bahamas and directed by Nick

Cassavetes (*The Notebook*), the film is lavish and summery and full of slapstick and glamorous clothes. But Diaz is proud of what it has to say. "This film lets people know that women can champion one another, they don't have to be competitive," she insists. "It's about the way these women get through that heartbreak and move forward. Sure, they take the low road for a second, but the story is all about their friendship."

Over the years Diaz has been linked to Matt Dillon, Jared Leto, John Mayer and Justin Timberlake. Asked whether she has ever encountered a man like Mark, she arches her eyebrows. "I'm 41 years



old. I've met them all. I think everyone, male or female, has been cheated on. Nobody gets out unscathed. We all behave badly, we all have people who behave badly towards us. [But] wherever there's an end, there's a new beginning. You never know who the next person that you're going to meet will be, who you're going to connect with. You can't waste your time and energy on what could've been or what might've been." She refuses to say whether she's dating anyone at the moment, but makes clear that her friends, including her *Charlie's Angels* co-star Drew Barrymore, play a big role in her life.

"The wonderful thing about female friendship is that we are always rooting for one another. We go to each other's houses for dinner, hang out, watch movies..." She stops mid-sentence, distracted by the shimmering afternoon light pouring in through the window.

'Everyone, male or female, has been cheated on. Nobody gets out unscathed. We all behave badly, we all have people who behave badly towards us'

"Oooh, look at the sun on the side of that building... So beautiful."

It's a typical Diaz moment. Sunny and spontaneous, she has an unshakeably optimistic perspective on life, which she puts down to a happy childhood in Long Beach, with her Anglo-German mother Billie, Cuban-American father Emilio



Clockwise from above
With Drew Barrymore, 2003; with Jim Carrey at the premiere of *The Mask*, 1994; with her family on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, 2009

and sister Chimene, who is married with four children. Her father died suddenly six years ago at the age of 58.

"I miss my pop, but he is with me all the time, he's a part of me," she says. "Everything I know comes from him and my mom. My dad encouraged us to do anything we wanted. I had amazing parents, they were awesome. We weren't privileged – very much the opposite. My family would collect cans to turn

in for extra money, because \$20 meant something to us. But we were very happy. I grew up in the generation that still played outside, not like kids today. We were always riding our bikes, roller-skating or playing football in the middle of the street."

There were memorable family road trips: "Five hours' drive up to the Sequoia National Park. We used to go camping, because we couldn't really afford to go on vacations. We never stayed in a hotel. We would set up a tent, go fishing and barbecue over the fire." And there were regular visits to her grandmother. "She

was a huge influence on my life. She had livestock, a vegetable garden, she made her own clothes. On a Sunday morning, she'd go into the backyard and butcher a rabbit. We'd drive up and the rabbit would be in the pan." I grimace, which makes Diaz laugh. "That's the best meat! Believe me, I was spoiled as a child," she says. "Spoiled" might not be how

most people would describe the way the Diaz sisters were raised. "Ever since I was four, I've been doing my laundry. I learnt to push a stool up to the washer and push the button that I couldn't read. My dad thought that having children was really about the mentality of the farm. You have kids and they do all the hard work, they take out the trash and clean up the dog poop, do the dishes."

Diaz attended a large inner-city school, which had barbed wire, metal detectors and a constant police presence. "It was stark and barren, but it was multicultural, and I think it gave me tools to relate to people and understand them. We had to learn to get along. Not that everybody did all of the time. There was violence. You have that many kids, there's bound to be conflict. I learnt to be good at being friends with everyone.

You have to be tough, especially when you're a skinny white girl."

The idea of acting for a living seemed far-fetched. "Where I grew up, the options were slim to nothing. In any given year there were at least seven to 10 girls walking around school pregnant. A lot dropped out. A lot ended going to jail, dying or falling victim to drug abuse. But there were also a lot who pulled themselves out of it – [like] Snoop and I," she says, referring to the rapper Snoop Dogg, who was also at the school. "And some of them have a family and a nice job and live comfortably."

I ask whether she has made a conscious effort to stay in touch with her roots in order to handle success better. "The thing about fame is that it doesn't change you – it actually makes you more of who you are. People who are



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famous are held more accountable than other human beings. You can't go out into the world without somebody taking [a picture] and sharing it with everybody else. So you do your best to be the person that you want people to see you as. For me that means being as authentic as possible. I'm no different when I am with you than with anybody else."

One thing her childhood did give her was a respect for money. When I interviewed her five years ago I was astonished to learn that her home was the size of mine, which wasn't that big. "I come from a frugal upbringing so I'm

not just going to throw my money away," she says. "I love to be close to my family and friends, so I spend money on plane tickets, having feasts, buying a ton of groceries and cooking, or going out for a beautiful meal, knowing I don't worry about how much the bill cost." Holidays are her biggest extravagance. "I did a little surprise party for my girl friend's 40th birthday. We took her to the airport – she didn't know where she was going – and we flew to Tuscany. [We went] truffle hunting, wine tasting and horse-riding."

Diaz's rise is well documented. A

model as a teenager, at 22 she auditioned for *The Mask* (1994) and became an overnight success.

Clockwise from left In *Bad Teacher*; in her latest film, *The Other Woman*; in *Being John Malkovich*, for which she was nominated for a Golden Globe



She is now one of the industry's top female earners (and reportedly the highest-paid actress over 40), and her films have made nearly \$3 billion. There have been mainstream hits such as *Bad Teacher* (2011) and the *Shrek* franchise, but also riskier roles such as *Being John Malkovich* (1999), for which she was nominated for a Golden Globe.

Despite all her acting success, she regards her book as one of her biggest accomplishments. "I wrote it because

a lot of women don't see themselves as beautiful. Once you understand how your body works at a cellular level, you're able to have the body you're meant to. And I'm not talking about a body like mine that's skinny, or a body you think is better than yours. I'm talking about having a real relationship with your own body. Getting older is not just about your butt dropping, it means that our bodies start to break down and we die. But the journey from here to there doesn't have to be one of hatred, wishing you looked like you did when you were 25."

That's not to say that she is against getting a bit of help. "Life is long. There are things that you try that work for you and things that don't work for you. I'm not going to say that I haven't tried those things, because everybody has, all my girl friends have, things like Botox and fillers," she says. "It's part of figuring things out, knowing yourself and going, 'Oh right, this doesn't work for me.'"

Neither does she have a fixed opinion on motherhood. "I've never said never to anything in life. If I wanted kids, at any

point in life, I would have them. But I'm certain that if at any point I wanted a child, that child would find its way into my life, whether through adoption, or through being in a relationship with somebody who has a child. I can't see the future, but one thing I do know is that I'm not childless. I have a ton of children in my life. I can have a kid any second, if I want.

All my friends would be like, "Sure, come and get them," she says with a laugh.

"I also, by the way, have a lot of girl friends who don't have children. It's not like I'm the spinster who didn't have a child. I just didn't do that in life, and I'm OK with that. I know the choices I made. I know why I made them. I'm very much a person who lives in the moment. When you come from where I do, there are so many ways my life could have gone." • "The Other Woman" is out on Wednesday