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# VOGUE

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**"I HAVE A  
NEW FOCUS"**

## Halle Berry

On How  
Motherhood  
Changed  
Her Life

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**MOMS ON THE FRONT LINE**  
And the Children Left Behind



here have you been, Halle Berry?

If one hadn't read the tabloids lately, one might be forgiven for thinking that the Oscar-winning actress had thrown in the towel. After all, she has not given a proper interview in three years, nor has she made a big commercial film since *X-Men: The Last Stand*, four years ago. Aside from her Revlon ads and a perfume launch for Coty, Berry has lain low by the 2010 standards of never-let-'em-see-you-rest celebrity. Except, of course, most of us do see the tabloids, where Berry appears nearly every single day. Which means you already know two things: that Berry gave birth to perhaps the cutest baby girl ever, Nahla, with her very good-looking boyfriend, Gabriel Aubry, in March 2008; and that Berry and Aubry split earlier this year, an event that was covered as if Michelle Obama had decided to take the kids and move back to Chicago.

On a perfect day in June, Halle Berry and I are having lunch in the garden of Il Cielo, in Beverly Hills. She is wearing distressed jeans, a black sleeveless shirt, and a lot of silver jewelry made by a woman named Irit. "She is my new favorite thing," Berry says, "my biggest indulgence of this year." I start by asking her why she hasn't given an interview in so long. "I was burned-out with having other people tell the story about me that they wanted to tell. I told my publicist, 'I'm not going to talk anymore. I'm just going to live my life and be who I am.'"

What is the biggest misperception of you? I ask.

"That I am this brooding, twisted, lovesick person who just can't get it right in life. Every story about me is so heavy and dramatic. That's not how I do life. But that's the impression people have, and that's what keeps getting reiterated. As if I'm still stuck in all the muck of the past. And I am so not."

It's well known that Berry had been, prior to her silence, uncommonly frank about her trials and tribulations, her relationship troubles, and her difficult childhood. I wonder if she has any regrets. "No," she says. "I don't regret it. When you share like that, it helps a lot of people, it connects you to a lot of people, but I do think I should have the right to move on."

The only reason she is submitting now, she says, is that *Vogue* made her an offer she couldn't refuse: the September cover. "What that means for a woman of color and what that means in the fashion world, what that means to pop culture, there was no way I could say, 'No, I'm not going to be on the biggest issue of the year.'"

Berry decided to have me join her while she went about her life for a couple of days. Which is why one morning

she picks me up at my hotel to see her personal trainer—the personal trainer (to the stars, the Lakers . . . ), Gunnar Peterson, with whom she has been working out five days a week for the past year. At 44, she is obviously in extraordinary shape, toned and tan and tiny as ever—the most fit she has ever been in her life. She is wearing gray tights, a hot-pink tank top, and those funny-looking split-toe sneakers. Aside from the career requirements (Bond girl, superhero), Berry works out so much because she has diabetes, and she weaned herself off insulin a while back. "I do not love to work out," she says, "but if I stick to exercising every day and put the right things in my mouth, then my diabetes just stays in check." She probably sees Peterson more than most anyone else these days; they live on the same street in Beverly Hills, and they are also in the process of developing a unisex sports drink for GNC, something "sustainable and light and not a gimmick," she says.

The workout is brutal. Gunnar has Berry lie on her back and attaches her ankles to a weighted pulley. Then he has her pull her knees to her chest, over and over again while she curses a blue streak. This, she says, is how she lost her post-baby "pouch." But this is also the exercise that caused her uppermost abdominal muscle to spasm a few times. "I went down," says Halle. "It was excruciating." Gunnar thought she was kidding the first time it happened. "I was laughing, but she kept going, and I thought, Wow, she is really committed to this little moment, staying in character." He chuckles and then says, "Another Oscar!"

An hour and a half later, we are back in the car. Sitting between us is a green stuffed frog that clearly belongs to Nahla. "Best thing that ever happened to me." She smiles. "I'll tell you a story: I took her shopping, and I had that moment that every parent has," she says as she zips through the side streets of Beverly Hills. "You look away for a second and they're gone, and your body just gets all hot. And so I had a little breakdown. *Shut the doors! I've lost my daughter!* I look around and, sure enough, 30 seconds later, she pokes her head out: 'Hi, Mommy.' But it made me think: What if she really did get lost? Would she be able to say who she is? So that night, I said, 'What's your mommy's name?' And she looked at me like, You idiot. Why are you asking me what your name is? I asked her again: 'Nahla? What is Mommy's name?' She thought about it for a second, and finally she said, 'Halle Blueberries!' Blueberries are her favorite fruit." Berry laughs, still tickled. "I'm just glad she didn't say 'Halle Blackberry.'"

That evening, I head to Malibu to Berry's weekend place, which is on a quiet gated lane that runs between the Pacific Coast Highway and the ocean. The house sits out over the surf—one of those big, white, modern boxes. When you walk in, all you see is an endless expanse of blue water.

I am here for a dinner Berry is giving for a handful of friends and colleagues. There is something unusually intimate and yet oddly stilted about the scene. The dinner has been staged on my behalf (the chef, G. Garvin, is cooking up a storm in the kitchen), but everyone here is clearly close to Berry. Among the guests are the photographer Cliff Watts, one of Berry's best friends, who has shot her many times for magazine covers and Revlon ads; Patrick Delanty, the interior designer who decorated this house with Berry when she bought it seven years ago; and Karen Earl and Avis Frazier-Thomas, the executive director and the president of the board of directors of the