

'YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW HARD THAT MOMENT IS'

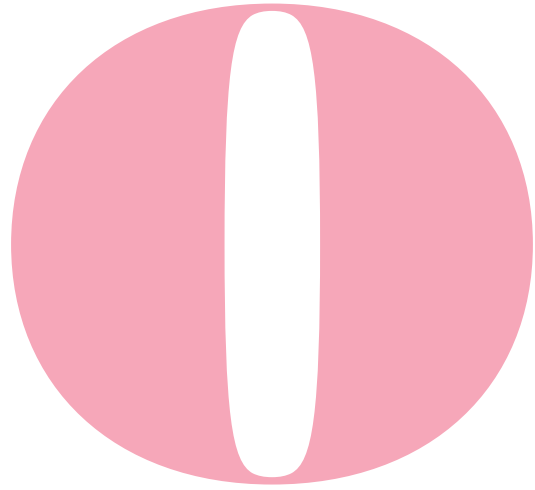
In her first extensive interview since coming out as a lesbian on Valentine's Day, Ellen Page opens up about her battles with depression, weighs in on the underage-sex scandal embroiling her *X-Men: Days of Future Past* director Bryan Singer and reveals her hatred of dresses: 'I would rather be in boy underwear with my hands on my tits'

by **SETH ABRAMOVITCH**
photographed by **OLIVIA MALONE**

"For so long I thought, 'Oh, I have to keep it private because my job is about creating an illusion' and all those bullshit excuses," says Page of being closeted. She was photographed April 23 at Ace Hotel Downtown Los Angeles.

Styling by **SAMANTHA MCMILLEN**
On Page: Saint Laurent blouse and pants.





ON THE MORNING OF FEB. 15, STILL DAZED AND GIDDY from the events of the night before, Ellen Page shuffled through LAX to catch a flight to Montreal, where she was shooting *X-Men: Days of Future Past*. Had that really just happened? Thousands of congratulatory tweets, still pouring in, confirmed that yes, it had. Just half a day earlier, the compact movie star (5-foot-1 in sneakers, and she's usually in them) who broke through playing a punk-rock-loving pregnant teen in 2007's *Juno* had stood in front of a crowded Las Vegas ballroom and, in an electrifying declaration of personal identity, come out as a gay woman.

Like her *X-Men* character Kitty Pryde, whose powers allow her to pass through solid matter, Page had traversed the proverbial closet door as gracefully as if it never had been there at all.

Now, two months later, the 27-year-old is seated on the terrace at the Chateau Marmont — not far from her new \$1.7 million home in the Hollywood Hills — for her first extensive interview since the Valentine's Day speech heard round the world. She's outfitted in her preferred uniform of jeans, red flannel shirt and black bomber jacket, a "TOM BOY" trucker hat pulled snugly over her head. It begins with a handshake and a world-weary smile, and not long after she's reminiscing about the warm welcome that greeted her on the *X-Men* set upon her arrival: "I can remember sitting behind monitors with Hugh Jackman, and he was like, 'You seem so different already!' And I was like, 'I feel different already.'"

Over the course of a wide-ranging two-hour conversation, Page gets fired up (about "binary gender systems," as well as discussion of her producing her first film), starry-eyed (at the thought of one day getting married and raising kids) and flat-out silly (about her addiction to renaming people's pets on Twitter). She also proves disarmingly open about her years-long battle with depression. "I was sad, honestly," she later admits. "And obviously that's a very personal thing to say, but I say it to encourage whatever other people are feeling. Very sad, isolated, a lot of anxiety. No more."

In 2014, as roadblocks to same-sex marriage topple throughout the country and such gay-friendly shows as *Glee* and *Orange Is the New Black* proliferate, the prospect of another celebrity coming-out story might not seem all that remarkable. It has been 17 years, after all, since Ellen DeGeneres declared, "Yep, I'm Gay," on the cover of *Time* — a landmark moment for gay and lesbian visibility that, America tends to forget, was followed by the cancellation of her ABC sitcom and three years of industry radioactivity.

Yet while many more since have followed suit, it's unprecedented for a celebrity at Page's level — under 30,



1. Page was flanked by *Juno* screenwriter Diablo Cody (left) and director Jason Reitman in 2008. 2. At her Feb. 14 speech in Las Vegas, where she came out as a gay woman. 3. Page in her breakout role in 2005's *Hard Candy*. 4. With Skarsgard, her co-star in *The East*, at the film's premiere in 2013.



Oscar-nominated and still wielding the clout to get projects of a certain budget greenlighted — to come out of the closet at all, much less make the unequivocal statement, "I'm gay." Robin Roberts, to offer one recent high-profile example, chose to do it by thanking her girlfriend in a Facebook post, while Jodie Foster said, well, just about everything *but* the G-word during a speech at the 2013 Golden Globes that drew complaints for being needlessly opaque. Page, for her part, loved it. "You have no idea how hard that moment is, even though they're not fully saying what you want them to say," she says, addressing Foster's critics. "It's not about you."

Page's declaration did not come entirely out of the blue. The viral response to it — the YouTube video racked up 6 million views — was like a mass exhalation of relief, as if a key puzzle piece to this endearing yet enigmatic star had at last clicked into place. But for all the peace it brings to Page's personal life, a large question

"I sort of was like, 'What? This is what the whole world freaks out about? And every poem is about? I don't get it at all.'"

PAGE, on her early experiences dating men



THE X-MEN WORLD TOUR

SIX DAYS, SEVEN CITIES. The stars of *X-Men: Days of Future Past* would need Kitty Pryde's time-traveling abilities to make such an ambitious world tour come to fruition — if it weren't for an innovative plan hatched by Fox. The studio had considered launching the film at Cannes, but *X-Men 3* kicked off there in 2006. "We needed to come up with something different and bigger," says Kieran Breen, executive vp international theatrical marketing at Fox. So, after an all-star premiere in New York on May 10, the cast — including Jennifer Lawrence, Hugh Jackman, Michael Fassbender and James McAvoy — will break into groups to head to premieres in London on May 12, Beijing and Moscow on May 13, Singapore on May 14, Sao Paulo on May 15 and Melbourne on May 16. Fox created the X-Men X-Perience tour to keep up momentum — rather than drag the cast to worldwide premieres over several weeks — and, through the use of digital content, help fans feel like they're in every city. Fox will stream the premieres and is creating original content that will allow fans to track the cast's progress. "The whole thing feels like a connected and branded global experience," says Breen. "This is by far the biggest *X-Men* movie, and it had to have the biggest publicity event we could put together." Fox won't reveal which actors will be in which cities, but it's safe to assume that one BFF duo won't be split up: Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart. — REBECCA FORD

mark still hangs over how the revelation might affect her professional standing. In the years since *Juno*, she never has had that type of success again, and there are more than a few people in Hollywood who will say privately that a label like "gay" affixed to any young actress will have an adverse effect on her career prospects.

But there's another way of looking at it: that Page's secret was what was holding her back all along and that she now is poised for a midcareer renaissance. With *Days of Future Past* opening May 23, two indie starring vehicles in preproduction (including *Freeheld*, a lesbian drama she's been trying to get off the ground for nearly six years) and, perhaps most intriguingly, a potential studio action franchise on the horizon, there's certainly something about Ellen Page wafting through the air these days that wasn't before.

AS PAGE SEES IT, COMING OUT HAS CONSUMED her thoughts for years, but she kept it in check. "For so long I just sort of thought, 'You just can't. I love being an actor, it's a huge part of my life, so I'm going to keep that private.' And, 'Oh, I have to keep it private because my job is about creating an illusion' and kind of all those bullshit excuses," she says. "Because I don't see heterosexual actresses going to great lengths to hide their heterosexuality."

Although no single incident led to her decision, she does reference a Dan Savage appearance in July 2013 on the Canadian talk show *George Stroumboulopoulos Tonight* as having had a profound effect on her. Savage, the in-your-face columnist behind the "It Gets Better" campaign, laid out his argument for coming out in very plain terms. "He was like, 'It's a social responsibility and a moral imperative,'" recalls Page. "And I was like, 'You're right. You're *really* intense — but you're right.'" By early fall, her mind was made up. The next step was to call a meeting with her closest confidante, who also happens to be her main career strategist: manager-slash-bosom buddy Kelly Bush, who, as founder of ID Public Relations, is one of Hollywood's shrewdest image-wranglers.

The topic had been broached before, and each time, the 47-year-old Bush — herself a lesbian, who raises two daughters with her wife, with whom she's been for 18 years — would lead her client down a winding road of what-ifs, and the conversation would end with Page feeling that the moment was not yet right. But this time was different. Page had the experience of two same-sex relationships that she'd painfully had to keep secret: a two-year romance that began shortly after *Juno*'s premiere and a second, pricklier affair that played out after that. She still bristles at the memory of the "neuroses of keeping it quiet and always thinking about it and thinking about when you're staying in the hotel and when you're leaving the hotel. It's so awful and hurtful."

The next step was to figure out how to go about it. "She knew what she didn't want, which is a media tour. She didn't want it to be the 'Today show I'm Gay story,'" explains Bush, who arranged for a consultation with her friend Chad Griffin, president of influential LGBT lobbying group the Human Rights Campaign. Griffin listened patiently as Page spoke of wanting to keep the focus off herself and instead on "something that means something to me, because I'm boring." He mentioned Time to Thrive, an upcoming social-welfare seminar for LGBT youth, and it became obvious that this would be the perfect platform for Page's announcement. "And then he was like, 'But it's five months away,'" says Page. "And I was

like, 'Goddamnit.' Part of me thought, 'I don't think I can wait.' I thought maybe something would happen before, I'll just tweet something — but I waited."

That Page should want to reach out to struggling gay kids is understandable, seeing as it wasn't so long ago that she was one herself. She was born in 1987 in Halifax, Nova Scotia — a picturesque Maritime province where the license plates read "Canada's Ocean Playground" — and says she was "a total tomboy" from the time she could talk. Her parents divorced when she was a baby, and Page split her time between her schoolteacher mother, Martha, and her father, Dennis, a graphic artist who has designed Canadian postage stamps. Dennis remarried when Page was 5, while Martha has remained single all of these years. Her chip-off-the-block daughter can't really understand why: "She's cute, she's sporty, she plays soccer, she likes beer," says Page. "She's just a really cool chick."

Page's acting career began when a casting director dropped by her school and spotted a cherubic 10-year-old with soulful brown eyes. Page proved a natural at the audition, and she was cast as an orphan in *Pit Pony*, a period TV movie about a poor Nova Scotian mining town. The role earned her a Gemini Award nomination, Canada's answer to the Emmy, and two years later it became a regular gig when *Pit Pony* was spun off into a weekly series.

Meanwhile, Page also was developing into a fiercely competitive soccer player and got teased at school for being a tomboy: "I started getting made fun of and getting called a dyke and stuff," she recalls. It was around that time, at around 14 or 15, that she "really started solidly thinking" about the fact that she actually might be gay.

Not quite accepting her blossoming same-sex attraction, she tried in vain to date boys. "Any of my first experiences with guys," she says, "I sort of was like, 'What? This is what the whole world freaks out about? And every poem is about? I don't get it at all.'"

But there wasn't much time for dating in those hungry early days: "I worked and worked and worked. Very self-disciplined, much more so than I am now. I was like on fire." She left home in 2005 and moved to Toronto to enroll in the Interact program at Vaughan Road Academy — the same arts school that produced Drake and Alison Pill — where Michael Alex, her former social sciences teacher, remembers her as being a "humble, curious and intelligent" student. Around that time, she was cast as a homeless teen wandering the streets of Europe in *Mouth to Mouth*, a British indie that required her, just 17 years old, to shave her head.



Page riffed on the gay rumors in a 2008 *Saturday Night Live* skit with Samberg.

HOW THEY CHOSE TO COME OUT



Ellen DeGeneres

On a 1997 *Time* cover: “Yep, I’m Gay”

Rosie O’Donnell

At a 2002 cancer research benefit: “I’m a dyke!”

Neil Patrick Harris

In a 2006 *People* story: “I am a very content gay man living my life to the fullest.”

Ricky Martin

On his website in 2010: “I am proud to say that I am a fortunate homosexual man.”

Zachary Quinto

In a 2011 *New York* magazine profile: “And at the same time, as a gay man, it made me feel like ... there’s still so much work to be done.”

Matt Bomer

At a 2012 AIDS benefit: “I’d really especially like to thank my beautiful family: Simon, Kit, Walker, Henry. Thank you for teaching me what unconditional love is.”

Anderson Cooper

In a 2012 email to Andrew Sullivan: “The fact is, I’m gay, always have been, always will be, and I couldn’t be any more happy, comfortable with myself, and proud.”

Jodie Foster

At the 2013 Golden Globes: “I already did my coming out about a thousand years ago, back in the Stone Age.”



Wentworth Miller

In a 2013 letter turning down the St. Petersburg Film Festival: “However, as a gay man, I must decline.”

Robin Roberts

In a 2013 Facebook post: “I am grateful for my entire family, my longtime girlfriend, Amber, and friends as we prepare to celebrate a glorious new year together.”

Her portrayal of a naive-seeming teen who turns the tables on a sexual predator in 2005’s *Hard Candy* won her the attention of Jason Reitman, who was looking to cast the lead in his second film, a quirky teen comedy that turned out to be *Juno*.

For all involved in that movie — Reitman, Page, her co-star Michael Cera and the stripper-turned-screenwriter Diablo Cody — life never would be the same. Reitman still marvels at Page’s tremendous talent and work ethic: “I find that actors kind of fall into two categories,” he says. “They’re either kind of hyper-aware technicians who are able to puppet their face and bodies, or they’re kind of emotional creatures that get lost in the moment. Somehow Ellen Page is both — she is completely emotional and lost in the moment and simultaneously has the ability to hit every mark. I haven’t worked with another actor like her since.”

Cody remembers her first encounter with the film’s young stars and not being quite sure what to make of them: “Ellen and Michael Cera were these quiet, little Canadian teens.” But like Reitman, the screenwriter was astonished by what the young actress ended up bringing to her story: “Despite her being nominated for an Oscar, it’s actually an underrated performance,” says Cody. “I don’t think people realize how different she is from that character. It’s really a tour de force.”

During the shoot, the shy Page divulged little about her personal life, but an understanding developed amid the intimacy of a film set. “She didn’t have to talk about it, you know what I mean?” says Cody. “The people close to her knew.”

Fame hit like a hurricane. Page remembers being struck with terror when she emerged from a subway station to see her face on a Times Square billboard. Random fans would approach her excitedly, quoting back lines of Cody’s dialogue, a kind of teen-girl Internet patois. But nothing distilled *Juno*’s cultural-sensation status more than Page’s deer-in-the-headlights appearance alongside Cody on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. “That was when you knew,” she says. “When everyone was like, ‘Oh, now it’s going to make \$100 million.’”

The film, made for \$7 million, went on to gross \$143 million domestically.

It was during that dizzying period that Page first met Bush, who was introduced to her at the film’s L.A. premiere by John Malkovich, one of Bush’s many clients. Bush says Page was nearly unrecognizable from the woman she is today — a guarded outsider who was “very fragile and not able to enjoy the success she was about to experience.” Page agreed to a meeting at Bush’s office the following day, during which Bush offered her own perspective on the publicity game: Press needn’t be the enemy, she explained, so long as one could maintain “a sense of ownership” of one’s own image. Page found Bush’s spiel compelling and comforting and hired her on the spot.

Neither woman can remember a specific moment when they sat down for “the talk.” But at some point in the months that followed, the 20-year-old Page confided that she identified as a bisexual. A similar scenario played out around that time with her parents, too, from whom she always has felt “very independent.” Says Page: “The thought of having to come out to them never really crossed my mind. It was just like, ‘Oh, I’m in love with this woman.’” (It wasn’t until she turned 24 that she gave up completely on trying to have sex with men, having grown “comfortable” with the thought of calling herself a lesbian.)

Bush offered the same advice she still gives all of her clients, regardless of sexual orientation: “Your private life is your private life, and once you open that door, you leave it open for others to judge. I really believe you should leave your relationship stuff for yourself — keep it sacred and protect it.”

She heeded her handler’s words, but as Page was herded through a perilous awards-season gantlet — six crazy months of red carpets, magazine shoots and world travel, culminating in an Academy Award nomination and Barbara Walters interview — she found herself incapable of embracing her own Cinderella story. “I can imagine that was incredibly stressful for her,” says Cody. “Because a young ingenue, which is how she was being positioned, is expected to wear a dress on the red carpet, look a certain way, have that kind of It girl femininity. I did sense as early as our premiere in Toronto that she was really stressed out by those expectations and felt that she couldn’t be that girl.”

Says Page: “It’s hard to talk about because everyone perceives as anything you say that’s nothing but, ‘Oh my God, my dreams are coming true,’ that you’re ungrateful. And that’s not true at all. You’re a human being whose life is absolutely changing and you’re going through all this stuff, and it can be overwhelming.”

She says putting on the dresses was among her biggest pet peeves — including the custom-made, seafoam Dior gown she wore with red Manolo Blahniks on the cover of *Vanity Fair*’s 2008 Hollywood issue — and felt her obvious discomfort usually was written all over her face. She’s not smiling in the Annie Leibovitz photograph, but then again, neither were fellow “fresh faces of 2008” Emily Blunt, Anne Hathaway and Zoe Saldana.

“I used to wish that it was a switch that I could turn, and play the game and do the thing and put on the thing and smile and whatever. And I just couldn’t on an inexplicable level — soul, if I may,” says Page of those early obligations. “I used to say in photo shoots, ‘I would rather be in boy underwear with my hands on my tits than put that thing on.’”

Page was linked romantically back then to everyone from Canadian actor Mark Rendall, a good friend from her Vaughan Road Academy days, to Ben Foster, her co-star in 2006’s *X-Men: The Last Stand*. But idle talk about her sexuality trailed her, too, and grew only louder on Feb. 24, 2008. That was the night that her power-lesbian publicist sat next to her on her big Oscar night, where she’d wind up losing to Marion Cotillard, the star of *La Vie en Rose*.

It was gossip warhorse Michael Musto who, five days after the ceremony, first floated the question of Page’s sexuality in a *Village Voice* column titled, “Ellen Page: Is She or Isn’t She?” In the same article, Musto wondered whether she’d attended the ceremony “with her mother” — certainly the most efficient way to land a lifetime position atop Bush’s shit list. Musto later wrote a follow-up in which he took a measure of sadistic delight in recounting an angry phone call from Bush, in which he described the publicist sounding “as if her cat had just gotten stuck in a drainpipe or something.”

Page’s fears about celebrity media had been confirmed.

But rather than deny or ignore Musto’s tauntings, Page played right into them, participating two days later in a *Saturday Night Live* sketch as an earnest young woman who’d returned overjoyed from a Melissa Etheridge concert. The part, written by veteran *SNL* writer Paula Pell (herself gay), had Page gushing to her unfazed boyfriend, played by Andy Samberg, about all the lesbian



Says Page, “I get more hate, honestly, about dressing androgynously than about being gay.”

On Page: Prada sweater.

“Sometimes I think when you’re like, ‘Hey, I don’t give a shit,’ that’s the moment where people don’t give a shit.”

wonders she experienced at the event. “They were kind of like, ‘Are you ... OK with this?’ And I was like, ‘Yeah!’” says Page. If there was any backlash, Page never felt it: “Sometimes I think when you’re like, ‘Hey, I don’t give a shit,’ that’s the moment where people don’t give a shit.”

Ellenmania quieted down after those whirlwind months, and the ensuing years brought with them a series of professional disappointments. There was the 2009 bomb *Whip It*, a sweet, messy roller-derby comedy from first-time helmer Drew Barrymore, notable for a press tour throughout which director and muse held hands and kissed. (Page denies a romance with Barrymore.) She then played a rape victim in *Peacock*, a *Psycho*-esque thriller that barely registered. But her profile would skyrocket in 2010 with Christopher Nolan’s mind-bending

Inception, a part that required her to dash alongside Leonardo DiCaprio through the streets of a pop-up-book Paris. The smartly conceived blockbuster grossed more than \$800 million worldwide.

She then nearly made the leap to TV, signing on to play a scheming assistant in *Tilda*, an HBO comedy starring Diane Keaton as a Hollywood blogger inspired by Nikki Finke. But the network passed, and Page instead landed a prestige project of a different stripe: Woody Allen chose her to play a self-absorbed actress in 2012’s *To Rome With Love* — a part that required her to deliver a rapturous monologue about having sex with a woman. “He’s a very different director to work with,” says Page of Allen. “He doesn’t really communicate with you. He just kind of lets you do it. There’s not a lot of direction happening.”

Last year, when she appeared in *The East*, with Alexander Skarsgard, she became close to the handsome *True Blood* star, provoking a fresh round of tabloid rumors. “People really thought we were dating,” says Page.

But with each passing year, Page had grown a little bolder in expressing her own gayness. By late 2013, she was making no secret at all of her sexual orientation in her day-to-day life: “I would talk about being gay, make jokes about it, or go to a meeting and [mention it] — you know, because I’m also producing and starring in a lesbian civil rights movie and I’ve been working on it for years.” By her own estimates, 80 percent of the industry was aware of her sexual identity when she made her speech.

SIX YEARS AFTER HER PSEUDO-COMING-out on *SNL*, on Feb. 14, 2014, Page stood at the precipice of the real thing. Or lay, rather, on a bed in one of the lower-brow properties on the Vegas Strip, waiting out the several torturous hours before she was scheduled to take the stage. The speech was written, its words having flowed from her as naturally as “breathing” — particularly the most personal passages, in which she decried the “crushing standards” of the media machine. “I had to read it to a lot — like, a lot — of family members and friends

to get to a place where I didn’t cry the whole time,” she says. At around 6:30 p.m., Page was snuck into a boxy ballroom and took her place behind a podium. She stared out at the decidedly un-Hollywood crowd — mostly teachers, social workers, cops and other people in the trenches doing granular work of mentoring, fostering and in some cases incarcerating LGBT youth — and prayed that she wouldn’t break down sobbing or, worse, succumb to a panic attack, to which she occasionally is prone.

As the crowd quieted, she took a deep breath and began. It wasn’t until five minutes into the speech that she uttered the magic words: “I am here today because I am gay.” By then, the audience knew what was coming, but the power of the statement nonetheless shook the room.

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Says Fred Sainz, HRC's vp communications, "It was vintage Ellen Page in that it was clear, direct and to the point, and she didn't mince words."

Sainz worried that because it was a Friday evening and Valentine's Day, the story might not get much pickup. He couldn't have been more wrong: As Page, Bush and Griffin celebrated with tequila shots at a nearby gay bar (Beyoncé's "Drunk in Love" was playing when they walked in, which Page took to be a sign), Sainz frantically was addressing HRC's website, which crashed under the traffic deluge.

Page has made just two public appearances since her announcement — presenting an award to transgender *Orange Is the New Black* star Laverne Cox at the GLAAD Media Awards on April 12 and introducing an *X-Men* clip at the MTV Movie Awards the following night. Shooting a promo spot for the awards, in which she and host Conan O'Brien were trapped inside an inflatable ball, Page improvised the line, "This is why I stay away from balls," then excitedly texted a friend about her joke. "You know, all of those little things mean so much because it's so brand-new," she says. "It's so nice."

There are no more heated negotiations with frustrated stylists, as Page now is able to gravitate unchallenged to the clothes she loves to wear — primarily men's suits, neckties, dress shirts. She's well aware that her personal style rankles some,

far more even than her sexuality might: "I get more hate, honestly, about dressing androgynously than about being gay. It blows my mind."

Her newfound freedom carries over to her acting career. She's aware that she's not up for romantic leads, which is fine with her. "In a lot of the roles, especially now that I'm getting older, women are devices for the men in the story and very sexualized," she says. "That's what it's all about — being seen through this male, patriarchal gaze. Let's just get real; that's just what most scripts are."

Instead, she's set about creating her own projects, including *Into the Forest*, an adaptation of the Jean Hegland novel about two sisters fending for themselves in post-apocalyptic Northern California. Production on the film, which Page will produce and star in opposite Evan Rachel Wood, begins in June on Vancouver Island.

That will be followed by filming in the fall of that long-gestating "lesbian civil rights movie," *Freeheld*. The script, from *Philadelphia* scribe Ron Nyswaner, tells the tear-jerking true story of a New Jersey police woman who, as she wastes away from cancer, fights for her right to transfer her pension benefits to her domestic partner. When she learned that Julianne Moore had signed on to play the cop, Page, who'll play the surviving girlfriend, broke down in tears. "Julianne is so f—ing badass," gushes Page. "Because a part of me thought, 'Oh, she played a lesbian not a long time ago in *The Kids Are All Right*, and she did *Chloe*, where she and

Amanda Seyfried had a thing — and she's not going to want to do another.' Which is a horrible thing to think. I mean, I am the gay person and I thought that."

But first she'll be front and center as the latest chapter of Fox and Marvel's multibillion-dollar mutant franchise helps kick off the summer movie season. Page says she was shocked to be asked to reprise Kitty Pryde, a part she originated in the Brett Ratner-helmed *Last Stand*. "I was 18, and nobody knew who I was — just this kid and working with this insane cast," she says of the star-packed installment. "It was so fun to go back and be with everybody again." She delights in the sweet antics of stars Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen and says of Jackman, with whom she shares the majority of her scenes, "You know how they say things like 'the nicest guy in Hollywood'? But it's true!"

With regard to the controversy currently plaguing the film's openly gay director, Bryan Singer, who stands accused of sexual assault on a minor, she acknowledges that the allegations are "super, super disturbing. ... I guess the truth will come out in the way that it does, but it's hard to hear about someone being in that situation, someone you like working with." Having grown up on film sets, Page is all too aware of the kinds of abuses that can take place behind doors in Hollywood: "Whatever comes of it," she says, "I do think that there's a systemic issue of people in places of power manipulating and abusing young people."

So taken were Fox execs with

Page's work in *X-Men*, the studio now is developing her own action vehicle. Based on the award-winning graphic novel, *Queen & Country* is an espionage thriller in which Page would play an expert sniper in the British Secret Service. Says Fox vp production Mike Ireland, "Ellen brings a certain kind of intelligence to the role that will allow us to subvert genre conventions in a believable, cool way."

She may still identify as a "tiny Canadian" in her Twitter profile, but her roots are planted firmly in Los Angeles, where she's getting settled into her new home, a midcentury hideaway that previously belonged to Venus Williams. There she surrounds herself with her tight-knit group of supportive friends such as Skarsgard and Kate Mara, with whom she trades public flirtations (purely innocent, she says) on social media. While she's not currently tied to any one person romantically, she's definitely on the lookout for Ms. Right: "I'm so stoked to get married," says Page, with a sigh. "I'm such a romantic, it's awful. And I don't think I'd want to make a kid, but I'd love to raise one. I'd love to raise a kid."

The tears come rather unexpectedly, in response to an offhand observation about how happy she seems. As Page pauses to reflect, those soulful brown eyes begin to well up and her voice rises half an octave. "I knew I would be happier," she says. "But I wouldn't have anticipated just how f—ing happy I am and how every tiny little aspect of my life feels better." **VHR**

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FLYPAPER US/DE 2011

directed by Rob Minkoff, starring Patrick Dempsey, Ashley Judd

I'M NOT THERE US/DE/CA 2007

directed by Todd Haynes, starring Christian Bales, Heath Ledger, Cate Blanchett, Richard Gere

IRONCLAD US/UK/DE 2011

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THE KING OF FIGHTERS

US/DE/CA 2010

starring Maggie Q, Sean Faris, Will Yun Lee, Ray Park

THE LEDGE US/DE 2011

starring Charlie Hunnam, Terrence Howard, Patrick Wilson, Liv Tyler

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