

Comic Punch

Get ready for Woody Allen's new funny lady!

| By Sam Wasson | Photography by Stevie-Mada |

At age seven, Lucy Punch fell in love with Elvis Presley. But it didn't last. "I was absolutely distraught to find out he was dead," she recalls. Growing up in London, Punch always wanted to act, but never could she have imagined replacing—wait for it—Nicole Kidman after she dropped out of *You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger*, this fall's next film from—wait for it again—Woody Allen. Punch had been out of work for a year, and was this close to moving to Spain to teach English when she got the news. "I started screaming and I didn't ever stop, really." And it's true, she hasn't stopped—acting, that is. This month, Punch, 32,

"I got myself all dolled up and stuffed chicken filets in my bra."

appears with Steve Carell and Paul Rudd in the highly anticipated comedy *Dinner for Schmucks*. Between those guys and Woody, you've got to wonder: Which comic genius is Punch going to bowl over next?

What was it like to audition for Woody Allen? I was so nervous. I play a hooker, so I got myself all dolled up and stuffed chicken filets in my bra, fake tanned, fake eyelashed, lip-glossed, looked like a complete trollop and wiggled into my audition.

Did he give any helpful direction? The second day of filming—after I had to fall

on the ground—he said, "Stop being funny. Don't be funny." He doesn't like anything forced. **What are you like off-camera?** These are things I don't want to tell you! **We're moving into that phase of the interview! You have to.** I could regret it... **It doesn't have to be dirty. Do you like to knit?** Well, I shouldn't say this, but I've actually been mistaken for a prostitute. Once, in New York, this handsome Italian man started talking to me and I'm thinking, "Oh, my, he's gorgeous." He said, "You're so lovely, I want you to come with me," and I was like, "No, I'm with my friends." He said, "It's OK. I have money. How much?" **How much?!** I told that story to my grandmother thinking it would amuse her but she was horrified. **You were in a movie called A Good Old Fashioned Orgy. So now I have to ask you, who would be in your good-old fashioned...** Orgy? Truthfully, I would never have an orgy. **Surely you'd make an exception for one special man.** Well, I've always had a crush on Gene Wilder. So I might get on with him. But only as Willy Wonka. **Are you single now?** -Ish. **Come on. Who does the -ish refer to?** I'm not going to tell you. But I do prefer -ishes to orgies. **A**

