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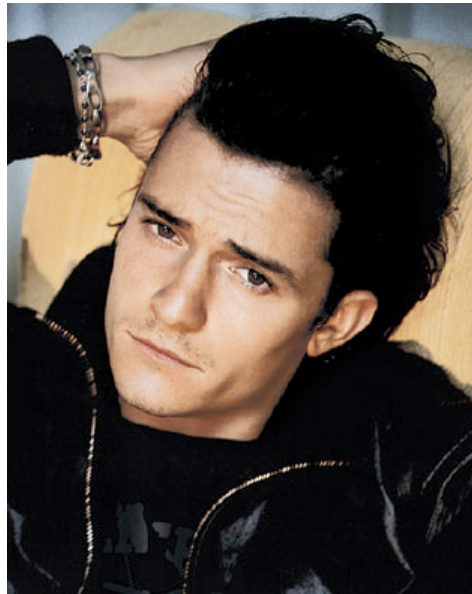


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AGE 26

WHY HIM? As flowy-haired archer elf Legolas in "The Lord of the Rings," he managed to spear the hearts of thousands of teenage maidens around the world...even though he was sharing most of his scenes with babe magnet Viggo Mortensen. And although his breakthrough role came just two years ago, he's already had the opportunity to work with such heavyweights as Peter O'Toole, Julie Christie, and Geoffrey Rush. (Did we mention that FABULOUS hair?)

INFLUENCES Paul Newman, Daniel Day-Lewis, and his "Pirates of the Caribbean" costar Johnny Depp. "They raise the bar, do you know what I mean?" says Bloom. "I admire how they've developed their careers."

IF HE WEREN'T ACTING, HE'D BE... Sculpting. **SCULPTING?** "I did better in sculpture exams for A-levels than I did in theater studies," he says. "My mum is always going, 'Just keep up the sculpture, darling' -- she's convinced she's gonna have a little shop somewhere and sell my sculptures someday."

AND WHEN HE ISN'T SCULPTING OR ACTING, HE'S... Indulging his inner news junkie. "You go into a bit of a cocoon when you work and you kind of forget about the world outside."

WORST JOB "I was a clay [pigeon] trapper," he says. "You know when you go shooting and the ceramic disks fly out and you shoot them? I was the guy who pulled the trap and let it go...I always wanted to be the shooter."

NEXT This summer Bloom is featured in "Pirates of the Caribbean"; next year he'll work opposite Heath Ledger and Rush in the Australian crime drama "Ned Kelly" and with Brad Pitt in Wolfgang Petersen's "Troy."

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