



Jenna-Louise wears
dress, £1,077, Rochas
at net-a-porter.com.
Shoes, £440, Manolo
Blahnik (020 7352 8622).
Bracelet, £445, Lanvin
at matchesfashion.com

Photographs by
Helen McArdle
Styled by
Nicky Yates

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

Jenna-Louise Coleman plays three different roles in the new Doctor Who and away from the Tardis she is just as much of a chameleon, shedding her Blackpool roots for metropolitan sophistication. By Gavandra Hodge



*Filming Doctor Who with
Matt Smith last October*



REX FEATURES




'I AM GOING TO COMIC-CON THIS YEAR. MATT [SMITH] SAID THERE WAS SOMEONE DRESSED AS A TARDIS LAST TIME'

Jenna-Louise Coleman is a consummate shape-shifter, which is just as well because the 26-year-old actress is required to play at least three different characters in *Doctor Who*: a Victorian nanny, the junior entertainment manager of the starship *Alaska*, marooned on the Dalek Asylum, and a 21st-century London girl. All have different names, different accents and exist in different quantum realities. And

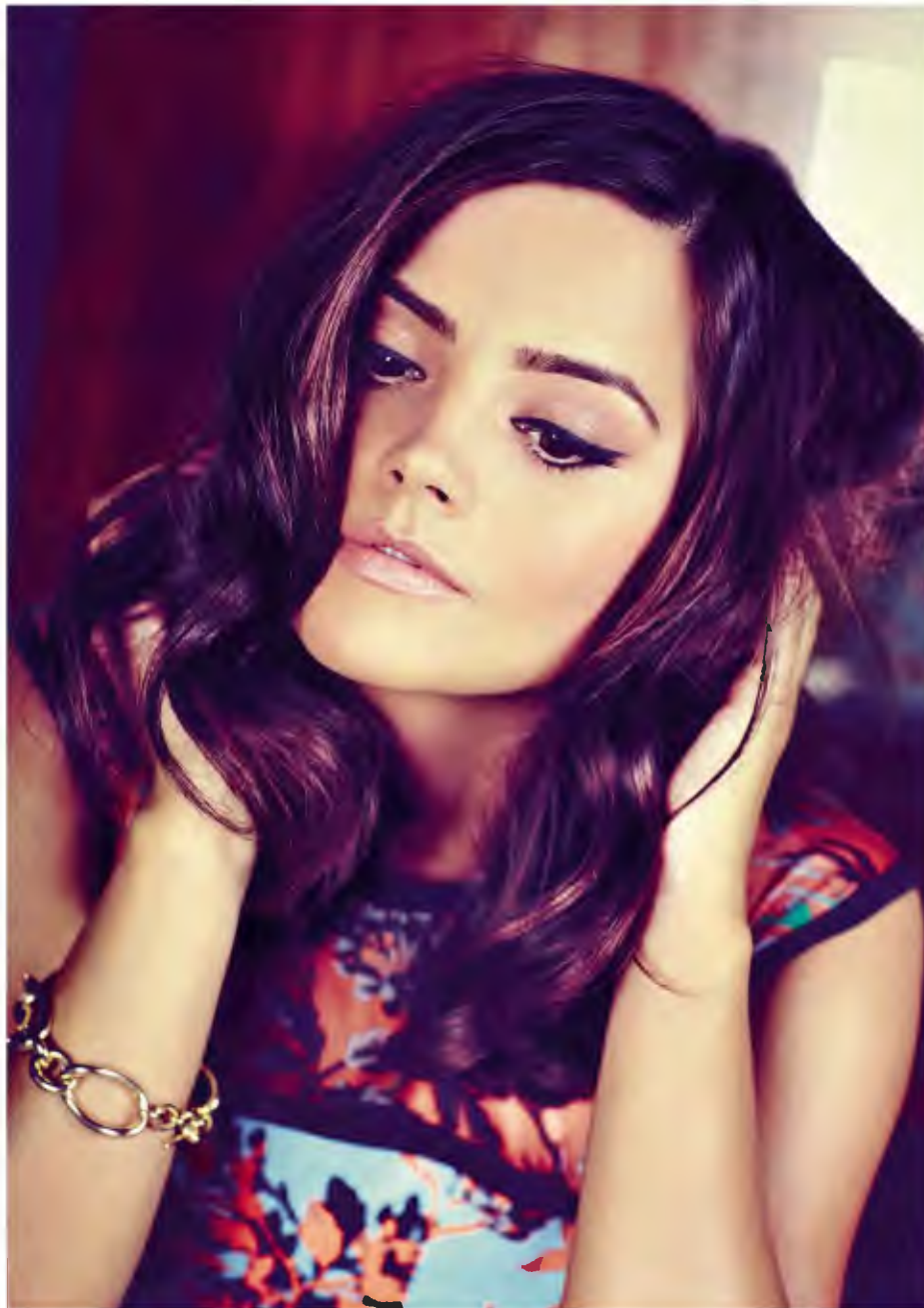
in another quantum reality altogether, Jenna-Louise Coleman is the daughter of a joiner from Blackpool, who has successfully morphed into an urban sophisticate who goes to parties with Florence Welch and playwright Polly Stenham and has a leading man for a boyfriend.

'I was determined to leave Blackpool,' she explains, sipping fresh mint tea in a Hampstead café, near the flat she shares with three



This page: Jemma-Louise wears dress, £2,525, Stella McCartney at matchesfashion.com. Ring, £4,400. Farone Mennella (faronemennella.com). Opposite: playsuit, £1,270, Dolce & Gabbana (dolcegabbana.com). Shoes, £485, Rupert Sanderson (rupertsanderson.com). Mother-of-pearl ring, £3,070, Farone Mennella

Jenna-Louise wears dress, £340, Nanette Lepore (020 7221 8889). Bracelet, £5,050, Farone Mennella (faronemennella.com). Hair by Carlos Ferraz at Carol Hayes Management. Make-up by Sonia Deveney at onerepresents.com using Guerlain Maxi Lash Mascara. Fashion assistant: Jenny Kennedy. Photographer's assistant: Ryan Davies. Shot on location in the Modern Chinoiserie suite by David Tang at the Boundary hotel (theboundary.co.uk)



As Jasmine Thomas in *Emmerdale*, with Paddy Kirk (Dominic Brunt)

ITV. REX FEATURES

school friends, her Northern accent softened but still audible. She is good at accents, dipping between them as we talk, from the bossy Mary Poppins-ese of Miss Montague, the nanny from the *Doctor Who* Christmas special, to the 1930s London vowels of Rosie, the aspiring journalist in Stephen Poliakoff's grand and mannered period drama *Dancing on the Edge* (not to be mistaken for a celebrity ice-skating show). 'I much prefer working in an accent. That is always my starting point,' she says.

The two shows, both appearing on the BBC within two months of each other, are wildly different. Poliakoff is a famously precise and formal writer and director. 'I spent hours in casting meetings with him, which is unusual. And he asked me to audition for all the different female parts in the show. He hates to miss a trick. I think just the casting process took seven months.' It was while she was filming *Dancing on the Edge* that Steven Moffat called her in to audition for the part of Clara Oswin Oswald, the 11th Doctor's new companion, following Karen Gillan's Amy Pond. 'I didn't really know anything about *Doctor Who* but Steven really liked that. It meant that when I went into the audition with Matt Smith I could be more spontaneous because I didn't know

him as the Doctor. And the plot seemed to evolve from audition to audition, with more scenes being written, and characters being introduced. There were times when I thought they had no idea what they wanted.'

It is 50 years since the Doctor first whipped out his sonic screwdriver, and it's an important time to be joining the BBC's most successful brand. It has just been announced that the 50th anniversary episode will be in 3D, and Jenna-Louise's multiple Clara Oswin Oswalds have been confirmed for the 2013 Christmas special and series eight. She is aware that life is about to get very strange. 'I am going to Comic-Con this year. Matt told me that last year someone dressed as a Tardis was sitting in the front row of the audience.'

In Blackpool, cultural thrills came in the form of Ken Dodd's summer residency at The Grand Theatre. Jenna-Louise's elder brother Ben is a joiner like his dad (when Keith and Ben visited her on the *Doctor Who* set in Cardiff they were more interested in the workmanship on the sets than the drama). As a child she did a lot of dance, but when she turned 14 she began to focus on theatre, spending every evening in rehearsals. 'My poor mum was always missing *Coronation Street*.' At 19 she

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won a part in *Emmerdale*, playing one half of the soap's groundbreakingly 'normal' lesbian couple, and was delighted to leave Blackpool and move into a flat in a dodgy part of Leeds, even though it broke her mother Karen's heart to see her youngest go.

After *Emmerdale* Jenna-Louise won a role in the BBC's school-set soap *Waterloo Road* and moved to Hampstead. On both occasions she was about to start auditions for drama school when she was offered a new job, and decided, after she'd finished *Waterloo Road*, that it was too late for her to be a student. As a result she is an autodidact, starting an Open University course in English literature and researching all her parts assiduously. She often goes to the theatre (tonight she's off to see Billie Piper in *The Effect* at the National), her favourite book is John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and she would love to play Hedda Gabler.

She and her boyfriend of two years, the *Game of Thrones* actor Richard Madden, read each other's scripts and tape each other's auditions. 'It is hard not to only talk about acting, but we do try.' They met in Budapest when she was filming Julian Fellowes' ITV series *Titanic* and he was working on *Birdsong*. 'Budapest is always full of English actors. When we were there *The Borgias* and *World Without End* were also filming, and we'd all go out for drinks in these amazing ruin bars – derelict buildings with bars in the central courtyards.' Richard

was already friends with Matt Smith, and the couple are part of a Primrose Hill scene that includes Polly Stenham and Channel 4's head of drama Piers Wenger. 'Richard had a party at the weekend that Matt came to. And Piers has these parties where Florence Welch sometimes performs, which is amazing. I like people who are ambitious about what they are doing, who are successful and interesting.'

Jenna-Louise's fierce desire to have a life that is more colourful and creative than that of the average girl from Blackpool is palpable, and she is not one to miss an opportunity, sending out audition tapes for parts that she has not even been called in for and dreaming of making her own film one day. 'What I would really like to do is an adaptation. I like period drama because everyone is so restrained, but they have all these emotions raging underneath.' She has just found out that this year she will have a three-month break from filming *Doctor Who* when Matt Smith goes to America to star in Ryan Gosling's directorial debut *How to Catch a Monster* and was immediately on the phone to her agent, keen to start setting up meetings to find something to fill the slot. 'They said, "Just calm down, Jenna."' But I don't think that is possible for her, not in this quantum reality. **ES**

Doctor Who starts on 30 March on BBC One

Jenna-Louise and Richard Madden at the *Titanic* 3D premiere in 2012

