

# THE LION

LEAPS

FROM

STRENGTH

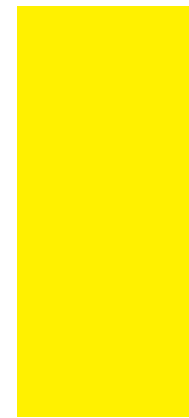
TO

STRENGTH

Starring in this year's dark mystery adaptation *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, it's about time Ella Purnell peeled down her Tim Burton posters.

Photography Ash Kingston Fashion Rose Forde Words Olivia Gagan





It's the end of the day at Ella Purnell's *Wonderland* shoot, and there isn't much time left, so she's whizzing back and forth across the studio, swapping in and out of dresses and boots and jackets with increasing speed. Final shots done, the rails of Dior and Chanel are bagged up. As everyone else packs up and goes home, she stays to talk.

She's got stamina. A year ago, Purnell was taking her A Level exams in the morning and shooting Tim Burton's adaptation of *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* in the afternoon. Now, about to turn 20 and a full-time actor, she's since completed British historical thriller *Churchill*, road trip movie *Access All Areas* and a biopic of murdered photojournalist Dan Eldron, *The Journey is the Destination*.

The east Londoner stumbled into acting as a kid, after tagging along to night classes at the Sylvia Young theatre school. "My mum was a childminder at the time, and the kids she looked after wanted to go," she explains. It was Purnell that stood out, though, and she was invited to join Young's agency. A career in musical theatre could have ensued: she was in the 2009 cast of *Oliver!* in London's West End ("chorus girl number six!"). But at 12 she won her first film role, playing a young Keira Knightley in dystopian drama *Never Let Me Go*.

Purnell found a temporary niche as a baby-faced version of various superstars. After Knightley, she played a teen Angelina Jolie in Disney's *Maleficent* — but her next job sees her in a role that's all her own. *Peregrine* is out this month, and Purnell is Emma Bloom, the eldest of a crew of misfits cared for by Eva Green's titular character.

Even the most faithful screen renderings of cult novels can be fraught with fandom expectation. Purnell has some additional pressure to deal with: as the trailer shows, Burton and screenwriter Jane Goldman have thrown a few curveballs when it comes to the much-loved character of Bloom.

The actress admits she was initially nervous about taking on the remixed role. "But then I realised that I actually had so much freedom. I literally woke up one day and I was like: 'Look at all this stuff I can do now!' Part of it is just relying on what Jane has written, [and] part of it is making your own decisions."

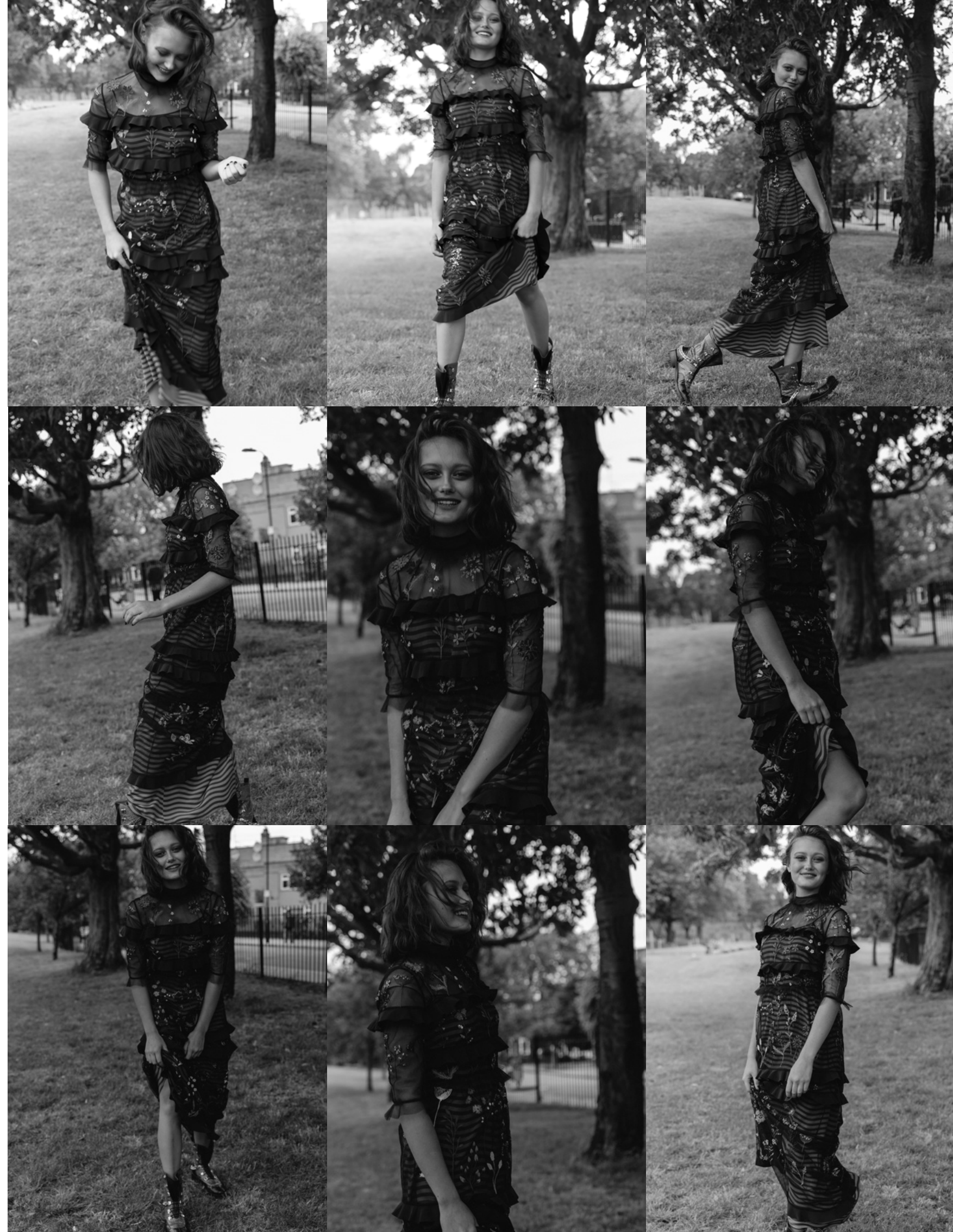
On the subject of screenwriting, she fires up. "Everyone's heard the spiel, we need stronger female roles in Hollywood. No. That's ridiculous," she says. "What do you mean? Physical strength? Emotional strength? All women are strong. That's the first thing that people need to understand." She's been reading a lot of scripts, and has started writing her own. "It's about creating characters that are three-dimensional, that have feelings and emotions that aren't defined by men."

Auditioning for Burton meant meeting an idol. "I was so obsessed with him before I got to work with him. I used to have articles about him and Helena Bonham Carter on my walls. I loved them. Then I found out I got the part and I was like: 'I have to take all these articles down now.'"

And as a colleague? "He's probably the most honest person I've ever met, because whatever is in his head, whatever he thinks, he'll just say. If it comes out badly, then he'll be like: 'Oops, that came out badly.' It's incredibly easy to get along with somebody like that, because there's no bullshit. You know exactly where you stand with them."

Which is a bit like Purnell. She's confident, straightforward and proactive: on top of the acting, she's events manager for Educate2Eradicate, a charity raising awareness about child-forced marriage and female genital mutilation. "We provide safeguarding training for people. We train teachers and do assemblies and workshops with kids to educate them about these practices, to just make them aware that there are options. I'd spend my whole life working with young people if I could. I think they're incredible."

Interview over, as we emerge out of a dimly lit basement into a warm London evening, Purnell's mind is already onto her next job: cutlery and chairs for the charity's first fundraising event need to be found, and she's directing a play that will be performed on the night. See? Stamina.



Previous page: Jumper MARNI. Opposite page: Slip and dress FENDI, boots CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN



Opposite page: dress CHANEL, boots CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN. This page: dress LOUIS VUITTON





This page: Jacket CHRISTIAN DIOR, Opposite page: Coat M&C, top and skirt CHRISTOPHER KANE, boots LOUBOUTIN



**Skin:** TOPSHOP Beauty Air Cushion Skin-Perfector - Shade 2.0 - £16.50, TOPSHOP Beauty Concealer Palette - Shade 1.0 - £12.00, TOPSHOP Beauty Contour Wand in Shapes - £12, TOPSHOP Beauty Chameleon Glow Highlighter in Tigers Eye - £12.50 (on cheekbones), TOPSHOP Beauty Everything Stick in Thrill Seeker - £10 (on apples of cheeks) and TOPSHOP Beauty The Airbrush Primer - £12 **Eyes:** TOPSHOP Beauty Contour Cream in Swipe - £12 (all over lids and underneath eyes), TOPSHOP Beauty Everything Stick in Thrill Seeker - £10 (over Contour Cream on lids and under eyes), TOPSHOP Beauty Kohl Pencil in Sable - £4.00 and TOPSHOP Beauty Chameleon Glow in U-Turn - £9.00 (used in corners of eyes) **Brows:** TOPSHOP Beauty Concealer Palette in - Shade 1.0 - £12 (Combed through eyebrows with mascara brush to lighten) and TOPSHOP Beauty Brow Gel in Edge - £8.50 **Lips:** TOPSHOP Beauty Liquid Lips in Decoy - £8.50 (opening image) and TOPSHOP Beauty Liquid Lips in Hustle - £8.50 (in closing image) **Nails:** TOPSHOP Beauty Gel Nails in Bravado - £8 and TOPSHOP Beauty Gel Nails Top & Base Coat - £12  
*Hair: Joshua Knight at Unit30 London, using BUMBLE & BUMBLE / makeup: Valeria Ferreira @ Caren using TOPSHOP BEAUTY / photographer's assistant: James Rawlings / art direction: Kat Jenkins / thanks to Josh Caudwell / thanks to Shed Studios Studio A*